691

AGRI-NEWS

CANADIANA

JUL 15 1991

July 1, 1991

For immediate release

This Week

Total agricultural exports to U.S. up in 1990 1

Minister announces formation of the Alberta Barley Commission . . . 2

U.S. moth, butterfly invasion not serious yet 3

Provincial ASB tour targets conservation 5

Determine development stage when cutting alfalfa 7

Consumer concerns a challenge in pork production 9

First time 4-H heavy horse project successful 11

4-H camp encourages conservation ethic 13

Alberta 4-Hers head to midnight sun 14

4-H delegates crisscrossing Canada 15

Briefs 16

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

Total agricultural exports to U.S. up in 1990

Alberta's agricultural exports to the U.S. continued an upward trend in 1990, rising by more than $148 million.

"Growth in our agricultural trade with the United States certainly reflects continued hard work by our producers, processors and the department," says Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley. "I'm extremely pleased with the increase, particularly in value-added meat products."

Isley adds there is potential for meat sales to climb higher with the recent pork countervail decision in Canada's favor. "Without the restrictive duty more Alberta pork will likely go south of the border. The western U.S. is an important market destination for Alberta red meats.

"Our red meats sector has been fighting battles to get their high quality product into the U.S. market. Continued growing sales reflect the perseverance of our sellers and the demand for a high quality, good value product."

Total agricultural exports in 1990 were $756 million, up from $608 million in 1989. A small portion of the increase is due to a change in how data is collected, however, the actual increase is significant. Fresh, chilled and frozen meat exports rose from $96 million in 1989 to nearly $160 million in 1990. Other meat and meat preparations increased to just over $24 million from $11.3 million.

Arnold De Leeuw, Alberta Agriculture senior trade director for the Americas, also describes the trade growth as impressive. "Some of the growth still stems from the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. As the remaining trade barriers are eliminated, we expect this growth to be sustained. Agri-food business people have increased their focus on the American market and companies are pursuing opportunities in the U.S. The companies aren't necessarily big ones making major deals, but there are a lot of smaller companies selling their products, and all that adds up."

Another commodity with a large sales increase was whisky. Exports in 1990 totalled over $47 million, up substantially from 1989.

30

Contact: Brad Klak
427-2137

Arnold De Leeuw
427-4241

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

Minister announces formation of the Alberta Barley Commission

Alberta Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley has announced the formation of the Alberta Barley Commission.

The official announcement follows two years of consultation between the provincial Agricultural Products Marketing Council and Alberta's barley industry. The commission will represent 24,000 producers and be the largest of the five grain and oilseed commissions created through the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act.

The Alberta Barley Plan Regulation empowers the newly formed commission to collect a refundable check-off from all barley sales in Alberta to fund research, producer education and industry promotion. The regulation was passed by the provincial government cabinet on June 19.

"The barley industry has shown great foresight in pursuing commission status. The Alberta Barley Commission will give the industry the resources to direct its own future and to respond to emerging opportunities around the world," says Isley.

"The Alberta Barley Commission is a self-funded producer organization which will provide barley producers with a vision and infrastructure to meet the challenges of a global, competitive marketplace," says Stan Wiskel, commission spokesman. "This will be accomplished through concentrated initiatives in research, market development, producer education and producer-industry-government liaison."

Canola, pulse, soft white wheat and winter wheat commissions have all been created in the last two years. These commissions, including the new barley one, don't have the authority to regulate production or set prices for their commodities.

30

Contact: Brad Klak
Executive assistant
to the minister
427-2137

Ken Smith
General manager
Alberta Agricultural
Products Marketing Council
427-2164

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

http://archive.org/details/agrinews00albe_46

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

U.S. moth, butterfly invasion not serious yet

Army cutworm moths and painted lady butterflies blew into Alberta this spring, but their numbers won't likely cause major crop damage says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"We'll be monitoring the fall flights of army cutworms and encourage producers to look at specific crops in relation to the painted ladies," says Mike Dolinski, section head of entomology and rat control at Alberta Agriculture's crop protection branch.

Both insects came on the wind from the United States he says. The army cutworm moths from Kansas, Oklahoma and southern South Dakota, and the painted lady butterflies from the southern United States and Mexico.

"The army cutworm moths, along with a mix of few other moths, have shown up across the province and have been noticed in sheds, barns and entering homes," says Dolinski.

These nondescript brown moths are about two centimetres long with cream colored blotches or line markings on their wings. They fly at night and are commonly called "miller" moths.

During the summer these moths will either stay hiding in buildings or fly to the mountains. In the fall when the moths are sexually mature, they will fly to fields and lay their eggs. Eggs will hatch and the larvae will feed on weeds and volunteer crops, then overwinter as half-grown larvae.

"If the moths and their larvae survive, we may have damage to spring crops early in 1992," says Dolinski. Alberta Agriculture will monitor their fall flight and assess the risk for 1992 he adds.

The painted lady butterfly, sometimes called the "thistle butterfly", has mottled black and orange wings with white spots near their front wing tips. The adults have a six centimetre wing span. "Many farmers will have noticed this attractive insect fluttering along road sides or in fields," he says.

(Cont'd)

U.S. moth, butterfly invasion not serious yet (cont'd)

Adult butterflies lay eggs, primarily on Canada thistle. They feed in a compact nest of leaves, silk and plant fragments they create. The larvae have a black head, while their body is a yellowish mottled green-black. They have yellow spines and a yellow lateral stripe on each side. There may be two to three generations each year.

Generally the painted lady butterfly is considered beneficial since its primary host is thistle he says. However, other members of the composite plant family, especially sunflower can be damaged. Preliminary studies by Bob Byers of Agriculture Canada in Lethbridge also indicate safflower isn't a good host.

"Farmers should monitor sunflowers, beans, borage, sugar beets, peas, lupins and corn for signs of damage," says Dolinski. "Note whether these insects are feeding on the crop, or thistles in the crop."

Past history shows the painted ladies don't cause damage to crops by direct feeding on foliage. There have been problems with fecal pellets caught in the webbing of thistle plants that were harvested with canola or mustard. "These pellets are about the same size as canola and mustard seed and can't be cleaned from the seed. Heavy infestations could potentially cause a contamination problem, but this is the exception, rather than the normal concern with this insect," Dolinski says.

30

Contact: Mike Dolinski
427-7098

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

Provincial ASB tour targets conservation

Conservation is in the spotlight as the County of Camrose goes on display while hosting the 1991 provincial agricultural service board (ASB) tour July 15 through 18.

Paul King, the county's agricultural fieldman, says the tour was planned around showcasing the county's soil and water conservation efforts. "The County of Camrose has lots of agricultural food processing, agri-service industry and history that we wanted provincial delegates to experience. But, we also have some unique demonstrations in soil and water conservation.

"Many agricultural service boards have put considerable effort into developing a local plan to deal with soil conservation problems under the Canada/Alberta Soil Conservation Initiative (CASCI). I think they'll be challenged by some of our approaches."

With help from Alberta Agriculture district agriculturalists, George Rock and David Samm, King put together tour sites that will offer new perspectives to ASB members as they consider their own expanded roles in soil conservation.

One key site is the county's conservation farm. The donated quarter section has a wide variety of soil problems. Effects of wind and water erosion, salinity and reclamation from strip mining for coal are all present.

A number of people and agencies have worked with the county on the conservation farm's many demonstrations. Bruce Walker and Gerry Coen of Agriculture Canada did a detailed soil survey. Their survey became the starting point for an on-farm conservation plan prepared by Tom Goddard, Alberta Agriculture conservation specialist.

A variety of other demonstrations have been set up by the county including direct seeding into sod for forage rejuvenation, shelterbelt tree varietal trials and a salinity investigation with Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch. In addition to the county's own demonstration plots, the Battle River Applied Research Association (BRARA) has reduced tillage and winter cereals plots and the Battle River Forage Association has varietal trials of 26 grasses and alfalfas.

(Cont'd)

The conservation farm has also been the focus of a demonstration of computerized mapping.

"Our conservation farm has evolved into a showcase of what can be done when different governments and organizations work together on conservation," says King.

Also on the tour is a unique cattle pasturing system at the Bob Prestage farm west of Camrose. Prestage, King and Alberta Agriculture specialists developed a pasture system that imaginatively integrates rotational grazing, water management, solar powered pumping and fencing.

With technical assistance from the conservation and development branch, field drainage was improved to guarantee water supply to two large dugouts. Dugouts are fenced off to prevent direct access by cattle. A solar powered pump delivers water from wet wells, next to each dugout, to watering troughs. By fencing and using pumps cattle are kept out of the dugouts. This keeps the water supply clean and reduces foot problems from cattle wading in the dugouts. Bjorne Berg, northeast regional forage specialist, designed the rotational grazing system to take advantage of the different soils and grasses that grow on the quarter section.

"This demonstration also is a good example of conservation planning," says Neil MacAlpine, Alberta Agriculture farm water management engineer involved in the project. "By going back to the basics of the soils, water and topography on his quarter section, Bob Prestage has maximized the opportunities each of those resources offer while avoiding some of the liabilities that a poor use of this land would have encountered."

Another stop on the tour shows one method of managing solenetzic soils, deep ripping. Jerome Lickacz, of the department's soils branch, and ripping equipment suppliers will be on-site to discuss the pros and cons of this type of land management.

For more information on the provincial ASB tour, contact the County of Camrose agricultural fieldman's office at 672-4765

Contact: Neil MacAlpine
422-6530

Paul King
672-4765

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

Determine development stage when cutting alfalfa

Alfalfa's stage of development has been used as a guide for cutting alfalfa, but producers haven't used those guidelines consistently says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Some people consider the recommended 10 per cent bloom stage to be when 10 per cent of the alfalfa stems in a field have one or more blossoms," says Myron Bjorge, supervisor of forage crops with the field crops branch. "This was the originally intended definition. However, many consider the 10 per cent bloom stage to be when 10 per cent of the total blooms are open, and that's a much later stage."

Farmers need to apply a consistent guideline because when alfalfa is cut is critical to its feeding quality he says. "Producers cut alfalfa at a particular stage in order to capitalize on its feeding quality. As the plant matures, its nutritive value lessens and it becomes less digestible."

Bjorge says a new guideline for cutting alfalfa may help farmers decide the best time to cut their alfalfa fields. The guidelines are described in detail in a bulletin published by Cornell University researchers. The Cornell researchers have established mathematical formulas to estimate quality from the mean stage of development.

Vern Baron, of Agriculture Canada's Lacombe research station, says these formulas are fairly accurate for the first cutting at his Lacombe plots. Baron adds they may not be as accurate for subsequent cuttings, especially in August and September.

Alfalfa stands are quite uniform before the first cutting of the season, and the stage of development can be determined fairly accurately. There is more variation in maturity, especially late in the season. Late season alfalfa may not even blossom, but quality may still decline with age. "In the fall you must make allowances with this method, as with other methods of estimating maturity. However, if carefully counted this method should give a fairly consistent relationship between count and quality at the time of cutting within a given region. It can't account for quality loss due to leaf shattering and weathering," Baron says.

(Cont'd)

To start, farmers must recognize the bud stage. Flower buds are small, round and hairy when they first appear near the growing point of the stem. Newly developing leaves are flattened and oblong shaped. At the early bud stage (stage three) one or two growing points on a stem have visible buds. By the late bud stage (stage four), the shape of the developing flowers is noticeable, but no flowers are open.

In the early flowering stage (stage five), one flowering head on a stem has one or more open flowers. For an alfalfa stem to be in the late flowering stage (stage six) two or more flower heads must have one or more open flowers.

Applying the guideline to a field count works like this. If an alfalfa field has 25 per cent stems in late bud, 50 per cent in early flower and 25 per cent in late flower, then the mean stage of development by count is early flower (stage five).

"While mean stage by dry weight is more accurately correlated to alfalfa quality, and researchers will use this more and more in the future, counting is more practical for field use," says Bjorge.

Alfalfa for milking dairy cows should be cut from early to late bud stage (stages three to four) to maximize milk production says Bjorge. For general use it can be cut from late bud to late flower, stages four through six. "For example, a beef producer who wants to maximize total yield would probably cut between early and late flower stages (five and six). Once producers have used this method, the exact cutting stage can be fine tuned on the basis of their quality requirements," he says.

Information Bulletin 217, "Alfalfa Quality, Maturity and Mean Stage of Development", can be purchased for $4.75 (U.S.) from the Distribution Centre, 7 Research Park, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 14850, U.S.A. Make cheques payable to Cornell University and quote order code 125IB217.

Contact: Myron Bjorge
782-4651

Dr. Vern Baron
782-3316

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

Consumer concerns a challenge in pork production

European pork producers face the challenge of consumer issues in their future pork production says a British pork industry leader.

"The '90s, I think, are really the age of the consumer in Europe, particularly in the U.K," says Bernard Peet, manager of the British National Agricultural Centre's (NAC) pig unit. Peet was featured keynote speaker at the recent Alberta Pork Congress.

During a discussion of world production trends at a congress educational seminar, Peet emphasized a number of consumer concerns that have started to have, and will continue to have, an impact on how pork is produced. He says producers have to respond to what consumers want, and should look at changes in a positive way rather than treating them as a threat. For example, in response to concerns about intensive indoor production, some swine production in Britain is moving outdoors. Peet predicted as many as 20 per cent of British sows could be outdoors by 1995.

European pig producers face increased production costs related to environmental policies, animal welfare and food safety issues he says. An example is legislation proposed in the UK to limit the number of animals per hectare of land in order to control manure. The proposed limit on fattening pigs is 16 per hectare and for sows (with piglets), five per hectare. Other proposed British legislation includes disposal of slurry, a ban of sow stalls and tethering after October 1992 and medication in animal feeds.

European wide animal welfare legislation has been proposed, but hasn't been passed.

Consumer concerns have shown up in how retailers do their business he adds. British retailers have a great deal of influence in the market as five major retailers control about half of meat sales. Those retailers have helped producers by promoting pork with barbeque and other specialized packaging. They have also begun to pick up on public concerns and put production specifications in their supply contracts, such as their pork must be from less intensive farming conditions.

(Cont'd)

Consumer concerns a challenge in pork production (cont'd)

At his NAC facility, Peet says they emphasis a complete quality system embracing production through to the consumer.

Some production losses in Canada are related to consumer concerns about animal welfare says Jennifer Aalhus, meat quality scientist at Agriculture Canada's Lacombe research station, who also spoke at the seminar session on world production trends. In particular, she outlined carcass and quality losses related to handling and slaughter and provided suggestions for transportation, slaughter facilities, actual slaughter and carcass cooling rates.

Outside of changes stemming from consumer related issues Peet says other influences on production in Europe will include the now open Eastern European market, possible changes to EC grain policy because of GATT and the 1993 removal of border health control.

He noted an emerging pig power in Europe could be Spain. Currently it has the second largest European pig population and an opportunity for expansion with inexpensive land and labour. Europe's top pork producing country, the Netherlands, probably has peaked and now faces concerns such as manure disposal he adds.

Also during the session Jim Morris, general manager of the Saskatchewan Pork Producers Marketing Board, provided a look at the USSR market. He described the background of the 1990 Canadian pork sale to the Soviet Union, details of the shipment and the possibility of future pork sales to the USSR. Morris says the Soviets have a desperate need to modernize their meat production, processing facilities and marketing. Until that happens, Canada and other pork exporters are limited in how they can market their products. For example, the Soviets don't trade in specific cuts. And even as the economy changes to a free market and state monopoly buying breaks down, he says people can't be commanded to be entrepreneurs.

AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

First time 4-H heavy horse project successful

JIMILEE CAROTHERS AND HER 4-H HEAVY HORSE

4-H light horse clubs are plentiful in Alberta, but for the first time five senior 4-H members took on a heavy horse project this year.

"This was a pilot project initiated by the Belgian Breeders Association with support from the Alberta Heavy Horse Breeders," says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture 4-H livestock specialist. "Among their goals are establishing an industry based heavy horse 4-H project and enabling 4-H members to gain an understanding of the heavy horse industry."

Through the program a senior 4-H member obtains, raises and sells a heavy horse. Along the way members learn the responsibility of caring for a young horse as well the specifics of care, feeding, breeding, management, health requirements and economics of raising a draft horse. "The project fits into the objectives of a young horse 4-H project," adds Wiegman.

In the 1990-91 project, members leased a foal from a breeder, raised it, prepared it for sale and auctioned it last month at the annual summer Alberta draft horse sale in Lacombe.

(Cont'd)

AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch

First time 4-H heavy horse project successful (cont'd)

Participating in this year's initial project were the following 4-H members and breeders (foal's breed in brackets): Jimilee Carothers, Endiang, and Harry and Hazel Swainson, Sedgewick (Belgian); Daniel Chostner, Craigmyle, and Rodger Nicolas, Devon (Belgian); Donna Bergman, Craigmyle, and Dale Rosenke, Olds (Clydesdale); and, Becky and Lane Kimble, Grande Prairie, and Connie Patterson, Dawson Creek, B.C. (Percheron).

The members' achievement day was held in conjunction with the sale. Top spots in the halter class went to the Belgian foals, Carothers was first and Chostner was second. Carothers was also second in the showmanship class. Becky Kimble won the showmanship class.

As part of the lease agreement, the sale price of the foals were split between member (40 per cent) and breeder (60 per cent) after documented expenses were paid up to a maximum of $500. Sale amounts over $1,000 are 90 per cent to the breeder and 10 per cent to the 4-Her. The project average sale price was $930.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
427-2541

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

4-H camp encourages conservation ethic

A fun and active provincial 4-H event teaches participants that thinking globally and acting locally is the key to a feeling of control in our complex environment.

Conservation camp is an annual event held at the provincial 4-H Centre at Battle Lake. This year the camp runs from July 28 through August 2. The camp is designed to help 4-Hers develop an awareness and appreciation for our natural environment says Henry Wiegman, a specialist with Alberta Agriculture's 4-H branch.

"With a better understanding of the environment and what can be done to protect it, 4-H members can start to spread the conservation message to family, friends and their community," he says.

While the conservation camp is hardly new--1991 is its 26th year--its focus has become increasingly important in a more environmentally conscious society. "It's difficult to pick up a newspaper or watch an hour's worth of news and not hear something about an environmental issue. It leaves many people feeling helpless," he says. "But, the camp gives tools to the members, so they can make a difference starting in their own communities."

Delegates are encouraged to show conservation leadership when they go home. The prestigious Grant MacEwan Conservation Award is given annually to the conservation camper who best spreads the conservation message in the year after they attend the camp. The 1990 winner, Deanna Brown of Tofield, also received an 1991 Alberta Environment Award last month for her conservation efforts.

The 4-H campers are mostly from Alberta, but delegates also come from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Montana. Each delegate studies two of five conservation areas, choosing from: water, soil, fish and wildlife, range and forestry.

The camp is co-sponsored by TransAlta Utilities and Alberta Power Ltd.

30

Contact: Henry Wiegman
427-2541

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

Alberta 4-Hers head to midnight sun

Twenty one Alberta 4-Hers have gone north to the land of the midnight sun as part of an annual Alberta-Northwest Territories agricultural development tour.

The group left Edmonton on June 28 with an official send-off attended by Shirley McClellan, associate agriculture minister. They travel by bus north to Yellowknife and return to Edmonton on July 11. Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist, says the trip is designed to increase the each member's awareness of the diversity of agriculture in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

"We camp along the way as we visit agricultural production and processing facilities. We'll also be looking for Alberta Made products available in the Northwest Territories," says group leader Andrea Church, Airdrie regional 4-H specialist.

As well as the agricultural emphasis, tour participants can gain an appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles.

The tour's 4-H participants are: Shauna Adams, Forestburg; Greg Bartholow, Bluffton; Stephen Bishell, Veteran; Deanna Brown, Tofield; Julie Giles, Airdrie; Geoff Hall, Delia; Clinton Harris, Penhold; Christa Henderson, Lacombe; Neal Jesske, Schuler; Randy Meakin, Morinville; Cathy Penosky, Botha; Calvin Powell, Youngstown; Ryan Tamsay, Delia; Jeff Robertson, Cochrane; Laurie Rosiechuk, Lougheed; Jackie Sanden, Airdrie; Chris Solic, Lacombe; Lana Tacey, Strathmore; Kelly Tisdale, Red Deer; Glenda Tkach, Coronation; and, Diane Unrau, Taber.

Tour participants were chosen at the annual provincial 4-H selections program in May. Trip awards are based on community and 4-H involvement as well as interpersonal skills.

The Alberta-Northwest Territories tour is sponsored by Alberta Treasury Branches and Edmonton Northlands. This is the third year the two have sponsored this trip.

30

Contact: Marguerite Stark
948-8510

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

4-H delegates crisscrossing Canada

Five Alberta 4-Hers will celebrate Canada Day a day late by travelling out of their province to get acquainted with another part of the nation.

"Five Alberta 4-Hers will be going both east and west tomorrow [July 2], and four 4-H delegates from across Canada will be coming to Alberta as part of this annual national 4-H exchange program," says Marguerite Stark, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist.

In the Canada-wide exchange sponsored by the Royal Bank, 50 4-Hers spend two weeks in another part of the country. Alberta's representatives, their home towns and their destinations are: Hendrik Wildeboer of Lacombe to British Columbia; Terri Gergely of Coaldale to Saskatchewan; Carrie Gotzke of Bon Accord to Quebec; Erin Branson of Markerville to Nova Scotia; and, Annette Polanski of Thorhild to Newfoundland.

Each delegate will stay with one or two host 4-H families. "Our 4-H members will learn more about agriculture, industry and lifestyle in other provinces. As well, they have the opportunity to compare the 4-H program in Alberta with the one in their host province," says Stark.

Alberta's delegates were chosen at the provincial 4-H selections program in May. Trip awards are based on community and 4-H involvement as well as interpersonal skills.

As part of the same exchange, four 4-Hers from across Canada will arrive in Alberta on July 3. They will start their Alberta experience with a three day tour of Calgary and Banff areas and attend the Calgary Stampede. They will finish their exchange with Alberta 4-H families. Delegates and host families are: Arlene Larson (B.C.), Art Andres family of Fawcett; Laurie Hergott (Sask.) Terry Place family of Nanton; Jeff Longley (N.S.), Pat Vanderwell family of Duffield; and, Chad Gibbons (Nfld.), Ralph Seeley family of Hussar.

30

Contact: Marguerite Stark
948-8510

AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch

July 1, 1991
For immediate release

Agri-News briefs

69 RAMS FOR SALE AT TEST STATION FINALE JULY 6

The 17th annual Alberta ram test station sale offers buyers 69 top quality performance-tested rams says Alberta Agriculture's provincial sheep specialist. Six different breeds will be represented at the sale July 6 at the Olds Cow Palace says Kim Stanford. These include Dorset, Polypay, Rambouillet, Rideau Arcott, Romney and Suffolk. "All sale rams have growth indexes over 100, which means they are above average for their breed," she says. As well the rams must pass a rigorous physical cull for teeth, testicles and legs. Stanford notes that all the breeds on test had higher average daily gains in 1991 than in 1990. The range was between .401 for the Polypay to .520 for the Suffolk breed. Last year the breed averages respectively were .386 and .505. Also available in the sale are a select number of yearling rams from the wool breeds tests. Buyers can view the rams beginning at 10 a.m. and the sale follows at 1 p.m. For more information, call Stanford in Airdrie at 948-8517.

ACC ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR ZONE DELEGATES

The Alberta Cattle Commission is currently accepting nominations for zone delegates. Nominations for 46 positions in nine zones will close on August 23. The candidate's resume must be submitted with the nomination. Each zone delegate is elected for a two year term. This year's election meetings will be held October 28 through November 8. Eligible producers can contact their local delegate or the Alberta Cattle Commission office in Calgary at 275-4400 for a nomination form or for more information.

LAKELAND COLLEGE AND WASHINGTON STATE SIGN TRANSFER AGREEMENT

Lakeland College herd health technology graduates can now receive two years credit toward a four year BSc in animal science degree at Washington State University. The two institutions signed an historic transfer agreement last month in Vermilion. The agreement applies to students enrolled as early

(Cont'd)

LAKELAND COLLEGE AND WASHINGTON STATE SIGN TRANSFER AGREEMENT (cont'd)

as 1975 in the program then known as animal health technology. Past or prospective students interested in learning more about the transfer program can contact Lakeland College for more information by calling 1-800-661-6490 (toll-free in B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan) or (403)853-8420.

VIDEO FEATURES CANADIAN CHICKEN INDUSTRY

Now available from Alberta Agriculture's central film library is "Chicken: A Canadian Success Story" (VT 450). The eight minute video profiles supply management and the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency. For lending information, write the Film Library at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

PULSE CROPS FIELD DAYS IN LATE JULY

Four pulse crop field days will be held in late July in Vegreville, Olds, Lacombe and Wetaskiwin. Plot tours are featured at the field days sponsored by zone two of the Alberta Pulse Commission, Farming for the Future and Alberta Agriculture. Pea and fababean varieties, fertility, weed control, diseases, seeding rates and harvest management will be discussed by tour leaders from Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada, Alberta Environment, Olds College and the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission. The Vegreville field day is July 24 starting at 1 p.m. at the Alberta Environmental Centre. July 25 is the field day in Olds. The next day, July 26, is the Lacombe field day. Wetaskiwin is site of a field day on July 31. Plots are also open for visits throughout the summer. For more information, contact the local Alberta Agriculture district in the tour area.

OLDS COLLEGE HOSTS 27TH HORT WEEK JULY 16-21

Professional designer, floral shop manager, industry entrant or hobbyist can all benefit from the floral design schools and seminars during the annual Olds College Horticulture Week July 16 through 21. New and practical skills are emphasized along with up-to-date industry developments. For more information, contact Olds College extension services at 556-8344.

AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch

AGRI-NEWS

July 8, 1991

For immediate release

This Week

Specialized ag forecasts on Farm Weather Line 1

2nd Summer Agricultural Education Institute ready to roll in Olds . 3

Land rental rates holding steady 4

Trade moves news, but no hog market surprises 5

Feed analysis only as good as sample 6

Common problems, common solutions in beef promotion 8

Know your tomato type before pruning 11

Southern neighbours visited by Alberta 4-Hers 12

4-Hers start leadership journey at Blue Lake 13

Briefs 14

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

Specialized ag forecasts on Farm Weather Line

Alberta's Farm Weather Line has really caught on with Red Deer area farmers since it started operating last fall says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist.

"Our statistics show the Red Deer line received over 4,400 calls in May," says Peter Dzikowski, of the conservation and development branch in Edmonton.

All seven of the regional weather lines were busy in May he adds, with over 36,000 calls made to the lines. That total is part of a busy 1991 for the service. During the first five months of 1991 over 103,000 calls were made to the lines. "It's a 28 per cent increase in the number of calls compared to the same time period in 1990," he says.

The Farm Weather Line's popularity is because it offers up-to-date agricultural forecasts Dzikowski says. Agricultural forecasts include specialized information such as the drying index, relative humidity and wind speed. "Those particular bits of information are important right now as farmers hay," he says.

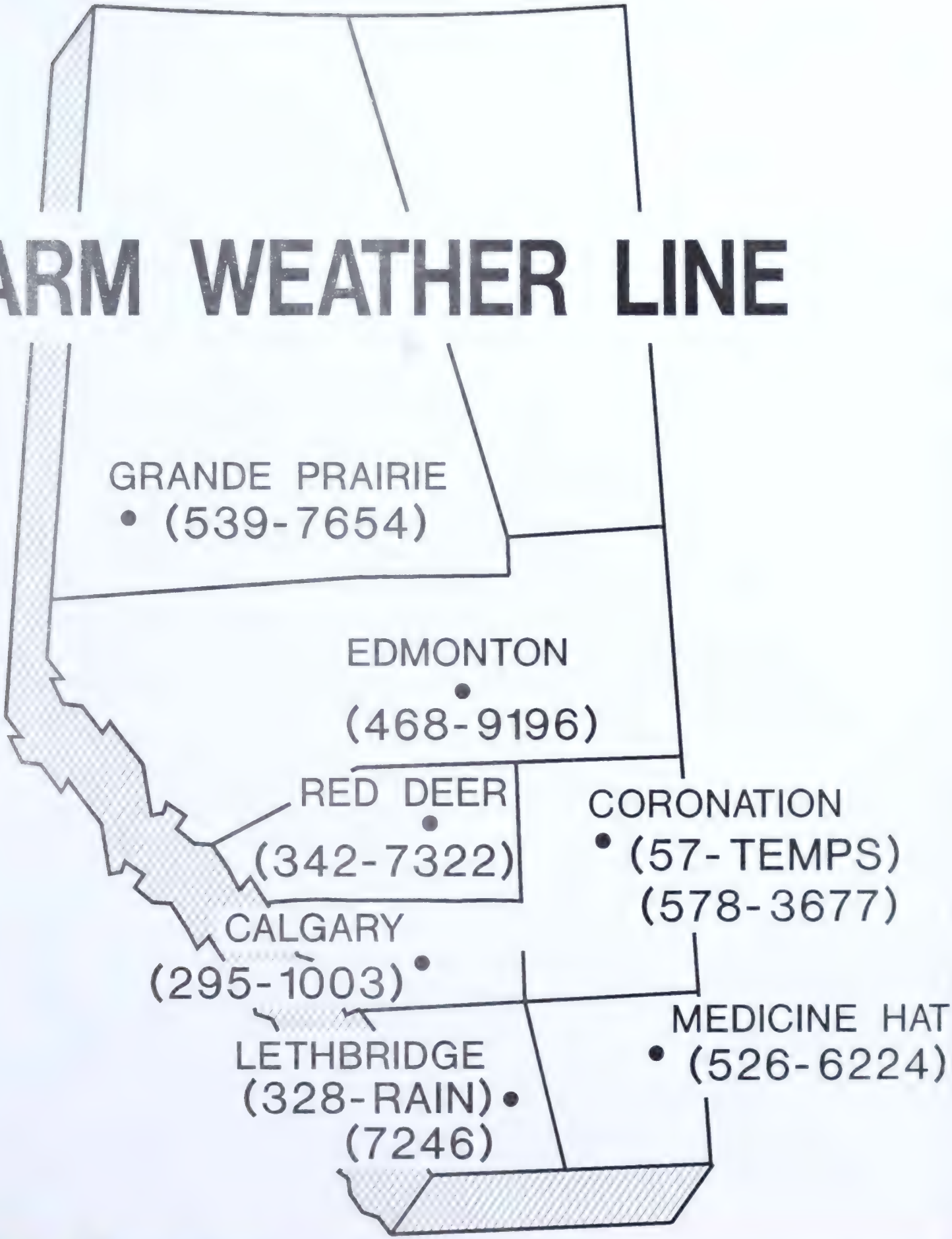
Forecasts are updated four times daily at 5:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Farmers can call one of seven Farm Weather Line numbers to get an agricultural forecast for their region. Farm Weather Line numbers are: Grande Prairie, 539-7654; Edmonton, 468-9196; Red Deer 342-7322; Coronation, 57-TEMPS (578-3677); Calgary, 295-1003; Lethbridge, 328-RAIN (328-7246); and, Medicine Hat, 526-6224. (See attached map.) Long distance charges apply to calls made from outside the local calling area.

The Alberta Farm Weather Line, now in its seventh season of operation, has operated year-round since the fall of 1989. Formerly it ran only through the crop season between approximately April and October. It is a co-operative service of Alberta Agriculture and Environment Canada's Atmospheric Environment Service.

30

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

FARM WEATHER LINE



AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

2nd Summer Agricultural Education Institute ready to roll in Olds

Thirty teachers from across Alberta will gather at Olds College for the second annual Summer Agricultural Education Institute later this month.

The institute, July 29 through August 9, is one of the most comprehensive of its kind in North America offering agricultural awareness training to teachers to take back to their classrooms.

During the 12-day, university-credited course, institute students will learn about Alberta's agriculture industry through classroom work, tours and a weekend stay with a farm family.

All aspects of agriculture from production through processing, marketing, environmental impact, careers, and research and development will be highlighted. Another feature of the course is support from the agriculture industry through an "ag-expo" where teachers can receive information on agri-business and commodity organizations.

Hands-on learning is emphasized at the institute. The Olds College course site for 1991 also provides ample opportunity for hands-on learning with its five on-site--dairy, beef, sheep, swine and equine--farm enterprises.

"Once teachers graduate from the course, they are expected to be better able to integrate agricultural themes and topics into all aspects of the Alberta Education curriculum," says Betty Gabert, Alberta Agriculture Ag in the Classroom co-ordinator and one of the Institute's founders. Lesson plans created at the institutes are used by the Ag in the Classroom program.

After the institute's successful debut last year in Lethbridge, all the organizers and supporters of the project are optimistic and excited about the 1991 version she says. Four key players are involved in the co-operative venture including Alberta Agriculture, the host Olds College, the University of Lethbridge that credits the course and major financial sponsor, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA).

The institute will move to Vermilion in 1992 and Fairview in 1993.

30

Contact:	Betty Gabert	Rosemary Peer	Rick Mrazek	Leigh Olmstad
	427-2403	Olds College	U. of L.	UFA
		556-8255	329-2452	258-4506

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

Land rental rates holding steady

Initial results from the 1991 land leasing survey show cash rents have held fairly steady this year says an Alberta Agriculture farm management economist.

"The range we've seen is from no increase to $10 per acre. Local conditions have determined any changes," says Alex Ostapiuk of the farm business management branch in Olds. These rates don't include GST he adds.

Ostapiuk says 56 per cent of Alberta's agricultural land leasing contracts are cash rent, while the remaining 44 per cent are crop share arrangements. A majority of these contracts are written--62 per cent--while 38 per cent are verbal agreements between the landowner and renter.

A special feature of the annual Alberta Agriculture survey is monitoring how government program payments are split between the landlord and tenant. The usual pattern of handling government payments in a cash rent situation is the tenant keeping the crop insurance, Western Grain Stabilization payment and all other government payments he says. "This year's survey found that a greater majority of tenants kept all government payments and a small percentage split those payments with their landlords."

In a crop share arrangement, usually the tenant kept all Western Grain Stabilization payments and crop insurance, but split other government payments such as drought assistance or the Special Grains program of a few years ago. "We saw a new trend in 1991," says Ostapiuk. "Sixty-five per cent of crop sharing tenants kept all the government payments, while 35 per cent split the payments with the landlord."

Survey results don't contain information about the revenue protection component of the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP), as the program was announced in Alberta after the survey was completed.

Final results from the survey should be available later this month.

30

Contact: Alex Ostapiuk
556-4235

Maureen Whitlock
427-4011

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

Trade moves news, but no hog market surprises

Winding down one countervail case and the start of a new tariff dominate the news in the hog market says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"The good news of a successful challenge by Canada of the American countervail on pork has been followed by a countervail on live hog exports to the United States," says Ron Gietz.

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced the results of its 1988-89 administrative review of the live hog countervail case and a 4.49 cent per pound (about $11 per hog) countervail duty on live hog exports. The high duty is attributed to large payouts from the National Red Meats Tripartite Stabilization Program during 1988-89 Gietz says. The duty is ongoing as well as retroactive to all exports during the review period. As well, the duty may double later this year when results of the final administrative review of 1989-90 are announced.

"Certainly duties of $11 per hog and higher can be expected to have a major impact on slaughter hog exports to the U.S. The saving grace for the Canadian market is that both exports and production are currently at low levels, so markets are less likely to be swamped with the increased local marketings," he says.

Gietz notes that although the pork countervail case has effectively closed, and it seems likely there will be no further challenges in 1991, he says it would be "naive" to assume there will be no further challenges of Canadian pork exports to the U.S.

Other than the trade news, there have been very few surprises in the slaughter hog market so far in 1991 he says. Margins for farrow-finish hog production in Alberta have remained positive through 1991. Recent increases in slaughter hog prices and declines in barley prices should improve returns to producers he says. Hog production, after declining sharply in the past year, should begin to increase gradually in the remainder of 1991 he adds.

30

Contact: Ron Gietz
427-5376

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

Feed analysis only as good as sample

Used properly, feed analyses can pay big dividends to the producer, but analyses can only be as good as the sample tested says an Alberta Agriculture livestock nutritionist.

"Some results obtained from feed analyses might not provide useful information, mostly because the sample wasn't homogenous and representative. At an average cost of $20 per sample, you can waste both time and resources. Feed analysis results are only as good as the sample submitted for testing," says Sam Jaikaran.

"This situation may be unintentionally encouraged by feed suppliers who pay for routine analyses of their customers' feed samples without ensuring proper samples are taken," he says. "As a result, more damage can be done through the use of incorrect information, because livestock is either under or overfed adding to production costs and performance losses."

Jaikaran says several precautions are necessary in order to ensure a good sample, because samples that aren't homogenous and representative will give confusing and misleading results. He recommends using a probe to take grain or mixed feed samples from a storage bin. When unloading a truck, several samples should be taken and mixed together. Then, one 250 g sample is taken from the mixture for analysis. Use the same procedure when sampling feed from a feed mill, or when sampling to determine ingredient separation.

Feed analyses are done for three reasons he says. One is to provide information about ingredients to make rations. Another is as a quality control measure to ensure acceptable feed quality and correct feed mill functioning. As well, analyses can be used to diagnose a problem.

If the feed analyses is used to formulate livestock rations, the only ingredients that require analyses are grain, field peas and special byproduct feedstuffs. In the case of grain, only a protein analysis is required because calcium and phosphorous content vary very little. The same is true for field peas. However, for special byproduct feedstuffs, protein, calcium and phosphorus analyses are all required. It's also useful to obtain amino acid analyses where possible for all ration ingredients.

(Cont'd)

"Lab analyses aren't necessary for common protein ingredients, supplements and premixes with guaranteed analyses," he says. These common protein ingredients include canola meal, soybean meal, meat and bone meal, and fish meal.

As part of quality control, Jaikaran recommends planning routine analysis of complete feeds, especially when feeds are manufactured on the farm. Protein, calcium, phosphorus and one or two trace minerals analyses are required. "These analyses will help you determine the weighing and mixing accuracy of the mill and the extent of ingredient separation during movement from the mill to the feeder. But, it's not possible to use the analysis of a complete feed to recalibrate a mill," he says.

To determine the accuracy of mill calibration, feed samples should be taken as close as possible to the discharge point of the mill. At least five samples are required to follow the progress of separation. They should be taken at the mill, varying points along the auger and bin system and a final sample at the feeder.

"If you're designing a quality control program for your own feed mill, you don't have to take a sample every time you make feed. After the mill is properly calibrated, only one analysis a month is enough to determine mill accuracy.

"If this analysis is acceptable, then you can assume the other feeds you make will also be correct. However, if the analyses aren't within the acceptable range, then feed mill recalibration may be necessary, or the ration formulas you use should be reviewed," he says.

30

Contact: Sam Jaikaran
427-6361

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

Common problems, common solutions in beef promotion

A shipwrecked sailor's steak fantasy is one way beef is being promoted to Australian consumers, along with ads aimed at career women looking for a convenient fast way to make supper.

The total Australia Livestock and Marketing Corporation promotion plan with four distinct campaigns through the year has helped the beef industry down under to be one of the few to reverse the trend of decreased consumption since 1987, even as beef prices in the meat case were increasing.

Details of Australian promotional efforts were part of a four country international panel on beef promotion in the '90s at the recent Canadian Cattlemen's Association first national convention in Calgary. John MacTaggart, senior vice president of the Cattle Council of Australia, outlined the challenges Australian beef producers faced and how they have successfully promoted their product.

No single factor was attributable to decreased consumption says MacTaggart. Among the problems were lack of convenience, beef wasn't well presented in stores, consumers wanted lighter meals, lifestyles had changed away from the family roast, there weren't enough variety in cuts and people had vague notions about nutrition. So, his organization developed a comprehensive advertising and promotional campaign that encompassed the intrinsic benefits of meat and the value added meal. Butcher shops, he says, became more like "meat boutiques" offering such things as stir fry packs and oven ready cuts. Merchandising teams regularly contact meat retailers to keep up beef's profile and supply recipe cards with "20 minute meals".

One stream of the Australian advertising was aimed at speed and convenience for the career person with new beef cuts and "beef short cuts" recipes. Initially aimed at mothers working outside the home, television ads have recently incorporated men as the cooks. The second stream encouraged traditionalists to do new things with their steaks and other cuts, and emphasized taste and family appeal. The steak fantasy commercial, a recent gold medal winner at the Cannes Festival, was part of that second stream he notes.

(Cont'd)

Common problems, common solutions in beef promotion (cont'd)

MacTaggart emphasized five components of their successful campaign: a consistent, reliable and healthy product; market research; a creative, reliable ad agency; following up to ensure ads hit the target audience; and, a commitment by producers to fund promotion adequately.

His story of the Australian experience has many parallels to what has happened in Canada. Particularly, an emphasis on nutrition was in both countries' first promotional campaigns. Both also faced a hurdle in the accepted national nutrition status of beef. In Australia, no definitive studies had been done since the 1940s. Finally in 1987, published data confirmed "lean beef had less cholesterol than previously imagined," says MacTaggart.

Updating and correcting Health and Welfare Canada nutrition information was the first challenge as the Canadian industry started full scale beef promotions says Carolyn McDonell, national Beef Information Centre (BIC) co-ordinator. The revised information revealed Canadian beef was 49 per cent leaner and had 21 per cent less cholesterol, and that was used as a platform in a series of Jack Sprat ("It's leaner than your think") commercials between 1985 and 1988.

As well, in the last year and a half the federal government has allowed messages about cholesterol which are part of the current campaign. As a result, Canadian consumers are more conscious of beef's lean qualities and how it compares to other meat says McDonell. In 1985 only 44 per cent of consumers were aware of beef's leaner qualities, that number has grown to 83 per cent in 1991 she says.

The industry's promotional campaign helped to halt the slide in beef consumption in Canada she notes. Consumption trends started to turn around in 1983 following the first national beef promotion in 1982.

Despite their successes, Australia and Canada share another common challenge, linking their educational nutrition messages with medical doctors who haven't been as responsive as other health practitioners and organizations. For example, the National Heart Foundation of Australia has endorsed lean beef cuts. Here in Canada, lean beef was included in a Canadian best seller HeartSmart cookbook endorsed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and Canadian dieticians have embraced beef's nutritional benefits.

(Cont'd)

Other international panellists were from the United States and New Zealand. Washington, D.C. based Mike Muirhead, director of marketing services for the New Zealand Meat Producers Board, discussed the brand recognition New Zealand lamb carries. The island nation has been part of the international meat market for the last century. It exports about 75 per cent of the meat it produces figuring in 44 per cent of the world lamb market and seven per cent of the beef market, so most promotion is in export markets. His organization spends about $6 million (U.S.) globally on meat promotion.

In North America, its largest beef market, New Zealand targets processors, manufacturers and catering sectors, and advertises in respective trade magazines, appears in trade shows and provides educational material to chefs. About $1 per tonne of exported meat is spent on promotion in North America he says.

The American representative on the panel, Californian producer Clay Daulton, National Cattlemen's Association (NCA) trade vice president, says beef quality assurance is the Beef Industry Council's top project for the '90s. The council, an arm of the NCA, promotes beef, provides consumer information and does product research.

Daulton showed convention participants a video discussing three current objectives of the American beef industry. Along with product quality assurance, issue management and image profile improvement were outlined.

Issue management, equated with a football defense, advocates avoiding confrontation while providing facts related to criticisms of the industry on environment, animal welfare and food safety grounds. In the video analogy, improving the industry's profile was described as the same role as a football team's offense.

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

Know your tomato type before pruning

Bush and staking tomatoes require different types of care, so you must know what type of plant you have says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"Bush, or determinate tomatoes, are stocky bush plants that may not need to be staked and shouldn't be pruned," says Jocelyn Young of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre. "There's a common misconception that all tomatoes should be pruned," she adds.

Plant leaves produce food for the plant, so removing leaves may reduce the amount of fruit the tomato plant produces. Pruning bush tomatoes also exposes fruit to more intense sunlight and may cause sun scalding.

Staking, or indeterminate varieties, on the other hand, should be pruned to maximize fruit ripening says Young. To prune, pinch out the suckers that form at the point where the branch joins the main stem. These varieties grow for as long as the weather permits. Wire tomato cages or stakes with string can be used to support the plants. To train the plant, gently twist the stem around the string being careful not to break off the top. Strips of cloth or plastic can also be used to tie plants to stakes.

Growing good tomatoes also requires regular watering and fertilizer. Soil around the plants should be kept evenly moist. Fertilizers should be water soluble and high in potassium. Plants should be given fertilizer once every four to six weeks. Young suggests 18-18-24 or 15-15-30 tomato fertilizers. Tomatoes grown in containers should be fertilized more frequently.

Flower clusters that appear towards the end of the summer should be pruned off, she says. "It's unlikely that flowers formed after early August will have time to develop into mature fruit before the fall, so you can remove flower clusters that form after the first week of August.

"With staking tomatoes, you can remove the top of the tomato plant at the end of July. This will prevent further growth and formation of flower clusters. It will also allow the plant's energy to go to ripening," she says.

30

Contact: Jocelyn Young
422-1789

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

Southern neighbours visited by Alberta 4-Hers

Four Alberta 4-Hers and their chaperones hit the road for Montana last week to participate in that state's annual 4-H congress and do some sight seeing along the way.

Neal Church of Balzac, Michele Porter of Duffield, Carolyn Douglas of Lacombe and Johnathon Stone of Wainwright will be guests at the three day 1991 Montana State 4-H Congress that starts today (July 8) in Bozeman. Accompanying the Alberta delegates are Janet Kerr, Red Deer regional 4-H specialist, and Terry Hill, a 4-H leader from Hairy Hill.

The state congress is designed for 4-H members to meet and participate in a number of activities including public speaking, judging, dress reviews and demonstrations. Alberta delegates will join in seminars, workshops and discussions as well as observe competitions.

"The congress offers our delegates a chance to observe an American 4-H program in progress and become aware of another area's 4-H program. Hopefully, this will create a greater awareness of our own 4-H program and how the two differ," says Marguerite Stark, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist.

"Delegates should come away from their trip with a deeper appreciation and understanding of similarities and differences between cultures, climates and lifestyles in Alberta and Montana," adds Janice Taylor, 4-H summer travel and exchange co-ordinator.

On their way to and from the congress the Alberta 4-H group will take in a number of well-known Montana agricultural and historical sites and points of interest. "Since they're camping, they will also experience Montana's great outdoors," says Stark.

30

Contact: Marguerite Stark
948-8510

Janice Taylor
948-8513

July 8, 1991
For immediate release

4-Hers start leadership journey at Blue Lake

Three Alberta 4-H members embarked on a two-phase journey to become better leaders last week in Hinton.

The Blue Lake youth leadership seminar started with a week-long session July 2 through 7, and the 4-H delegates will return in October to complete their seminar. Participating Alberta 4-H members are: Brenda Heidecker, Coronation; Ean Langille, Rosalind; and, Lydia Nagai, Taber.

The seminar, hosted by Alberta Recreation and Parks, is designed to increase leadership effectiveness says Marguerite Stark, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist. "Participants are challenged to achieve success in a positive experimental learning environment. Organizers also hope to have participants use what they learn in their respective youth associations."

"The program's emphasis is centered on the premise that each individual has unique leadership abilities, and that by developing a greater insight into your own personal strengths and areas of potential development, you can become a more effective leader," says Janice Taylor, 4-H summer travel and exchange co-ordinator.

Leadership skills, action planning, communication skills and outdoor recreational pursuits are all part of the seminar.

Participants were chosen at the provincial 4-H selections program in May. Trip awards are based on 4-H and community involvement as well as interpersonal skills.

30

Contact: Marguerite Stark
948-8510

Janice Taylor
948-8513

July 8, 1991
for immediate release

Agri-News briefs

MARKETING STRATEGIES WHEN SLAUGHTER LAMB PRICES LOW

Finding alternative markets for slaughter lambs may be frustrating at times says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst, but can be well worth your efforts when prices are low and every penny per pound counts. Jo Ann Cmoluch notes the market analysis branch is about to issue a marketing module on slaughter lamb markets that includes an appendix listing alternative slaughter lamb markets for Alberta producers. "When slaughter lamb market prices are generally poor, it's even more critical to sell your lambs as soon as they reach their ideal market weight," she says. Overweight lambs can be subject to heavy discounts in many markets. "Holding back finished lambs from a discounted market today, may result in lower returns or losses later due to extra feeding costs. If the lamb's quality deteriorates, prices might not rebound sufficiently to cover price discounts for excess weight," she adds. Cmoluch notes lower lamb slaughter volumes in the U.S. along with firmer lamb markets continue to give indications markets are slowly turning in a more positive direction. For more information, contact Cmoluch in Edmonton at 427-5387.

WORLD SUGAR FORECAST: SURPLUS PRODUCTION, WEAK PRICES

A recovery in the world economic situation would be a positive factor in world sugar markets says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Recent reports of weather problems in European beet growing areas could also improve price prospects if the cool conditions were to continue. But, current market sentiment is negative," says Al Dooley. The world sugar market in 1991-92 is forecast to be one of surplus production and continued weak prices. Despite the fact consumption is expected to reach record levels, output will be greater than consumption for the third year in a row and year-end stocks will rise, he says. "The result will likely be continued pressure on prices. World raw sugar prices have fallen from a recent high of 15.39 cents (U.S.) per pound in March 1990 to just 7.88 cents this May." For more information, contact Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5387.

(Cont'd)

FAVORABLE WEATHER KEEPS CANOLA PRICES DOWN

Alberta canola prices posted major declines during June reflecting favorable weather conditions in both the U.S. soybean producing regions and the Canadian Prairies says Charlie Pearson. "Unless weather steps in to threaten North American oilseed production, Alberta canola prices are expected to stay depressed during the summer," says the Alberta Agriculture market analyst. Pearson also notes farmers should have sold all their 1990 canola crop by now and a quarter to a third of their 1991 crop at prices over $260 per tonne. He advises waiting until early winter to price any more of their 1991 crop. "If you are forced to market canola during the fall for cash flow or bin space, I would be looking for contracting options which lock in a favorable fall basis, that is a deferred delivery or basis contract," he says. For more information, contact Pearson in Edmonton at 427-5386.

JULY 25 AND BARLEY CROP FACTORS IN FEEDER CATTLE MARKET

July 25 will be an important date for Alberta's beef industry. This is the expiry date for a countervailing duty on European Community (EC) beef exports to Canada. "A ruling by the Canadian International Trade Tribunal to remove the duty would be negative to feeder market psychology," says Ron Gietz, an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Cow-calf producers have the most to lose of any sector of the beef industry in this important case." He says the 1991 barley crop will also play a role in the feeder market. "The summer barley crop is always an important swing factor in feeder cattle price forecasts at this time of year," he says. "So far, prices have been in a low trend, to the advantage of those with feeder cattle to sell this summer and fall." He adds strong interest from the U.S. and a favourable fall outlook for slaughter cattle are also important upside influences on the feeder market. Lower interest rates compared to 1990--down five per cent--are another upward influence. "In combination, these factors point to fall calf prices about $5 per hundredweight above 1990 levels," he says. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at 427-5376.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News briefs (cont'd)

PETE'S FROOTIQUE OWNER HORT CONGRESS KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Alberta Horticultural Congress participants can tune into Pete Luckett live as the popular CBC-TV Midday show regular appears as the keynote speaker at the annual congress and trade show this fall. The owner and operator of Peter's Frootique is feature speaker October 31 at the congress in Red Deer. Luckett has 22 years experience in the produce business in England, the United States and Canada. Luckett is also widely regarded as Canada's leading expert on exotic fruit and vegetables. Luckett will make two presentations, one on preparing goods for markets and the second about reaching consumers. Congress technical sessions are on a variety of greenhouse, market garden, small fruit and commercial vegetable topics. A trade show and tours are also part of the congress activities. Registration information will be available in late August, or for more information, call Simone Demers Collins, congress co-ordinator, at 427-7366 in Edmonton.

LENTIL GROWERS TOUR JULY 18

The Alberta Pulse Growers Commission is hosting a lentil growers tour July 18 starting in Warner. The morning tour includes a post-emergent rolling trial, irrigated Easton lentils, a Sencor trial on dryland Laird lentils and a harvesting discussion. The tour ends with a barbeque luncheon at the Agriculture Centre in Lethbridge. Please pre-register by contacting the commission office in Lethbridge at 327-0626, Alberta Agriculture in Lethbridge at 381-5124 or the Alberta Agriculture Warner district office at 642-3884.

WARMBLOOD STUD BOOK NOMINATIONS OPEN

The Canadian Warmblood Horse Breeders Association (CWHBA) is now taking nominations for inclusion in the stallion section of its Stud Book. Stallions licensed and tested by recognized Warmblood registries such as Hanoverian and Dutch Warmblood will receive automatic inclusion. All other stallions must meet similar criteria. Times and locations for stallion and mare inspection will be announced later. For application forms and further information, write to the CWHBA at Box 668, Mayerthorpe, Alberta, T0E 1N0.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News briefs (cont'd)

AG FAIR WINNERS ENJOY TRIP TO CALGARY

They didn't win a trip to an exotic, far off place, but the four students with the highest point totals at the first Ag Ambassador Fair were still excited with their Calgary destination. Robert Ellis, 7, of Brooks, Deanna Fosen, 11, of Taber, Tyler Viravec, 12, of Crooked Creek and Chris Simpson, 17, of Rimbey and their families spent the weekend at the Palliser Hotel, dined atop the Calgary Tower, and toured the Grain Academy and Canada Olympic Park. Students also got plaques for their achievement as high point winners from the Alberta Wheat Pool, the primary sponsor of the Ag Ambassador program. The ambassador program is recruiting teachers as agricultural liaisons for every school in Alberta. The fair highlights school work with an agricultural theme for grades one through 12. The 1991 Ag Ambassador Fair will be held in Medicine Hat in November. For more information, contact Betty Gabert in Edmonton at 427-2402.

CATTLE INDUSTRY GREEN, BUT STILL HAS CHALLENGES

An environmental panel at the first national Canadian Cattlemen's Association convention and trade show applauded the steps the industry has taken, but also had some messages for the future. The CCA has already established a technical round table to identify key environment related issues. Jeff Green, a principal with Delta Environmental Management Group in Calgary, says cattle are an important part of the Prairie ecosystem, but suggested a number of ways for wildlife to better co-exist with livestock as well as better protection of habitat areas. These include deferred and rotational grazing, fencing marginal wetlands and riparian zones, and producers taking advantage of a number of government and private agency programs to improve habitat. Brian West, Alberta Agriculture waste management engineer, pointed out the strength of the cattle industry environmentally is its forage base lending itself well "with the integration of cropping and recycling nutrients back to the soil, back into forages and feed". However, he noted, as did other panellists, the industry has public relations problems. In particular West noted nuisance complaints related to odors from intensive production and manure management to avoid point source pollution. All four of the panellists agreed water was one(66nthd)most important environmental

CATTLE INDUSTRY GREEN, BUT STILL HAS CHALLENGES (cont'd)

issues. Glenn Fox, a University of Guelph economist who teaches environmental economics, went as far as suggesting reforming the structure of natural resource ownership so rivers would have particular owners responsible for their condition. Tim Ball, a climatologist from University of Winnipeg, discussed global warming and other environmental issues related to cattle production. For more information about the "going global" convention, contact the CCA office in Calgary at 275-8558.

JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE SIGNED

Thirty projects aimed at helping the agri-food industry achieve environmental sustainability in Alberta will receive funding from a one-year, $3.6 million agreement between the federal and Alberta governments. The Canada-Alberta Agreement on Environmental Sustainability (CAAES) was signed in late June. Signatories include Bill McKnight, federal agriculture minister; area MP and Finance Minister Don Mazankowski; Jim Horsman, provincial minister of federal and intergovernmental affairs; and, Shirley McClellan, associate minister of agriculture. At the same time, the joint Vegreville Agricultural Research Initiative (VARI) was also announced. The five-year, $7.5 million dollar initiative will focus on developing and transferring technologies to help farmers throughout the black and grey soil zones of the Prairies increase cropping frequency and spring crop residues in extended crop production systems. VARI was announced by McKnight, Mazankowski and McClellan. VARI's first two projects will be funded by CAAES. For more information, contact Brian Colgan at Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton at 422-4596, or Dave McAndrew at the Vegreville Experimental Farm at 632-3985.

WIND, SOLAR POWER AT LETHBRIDGE SITE DAY DEMO

Windmill and solar powered water pumping units will be demonstrated July 30 at a Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre hosted site day. Manufacturer representatives will explain their machines as part of a walking tour. The site is located directly north of the Agriculture Canada Lethbridge research station. For more information, contact the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre at 329-1212 in Lethbridge.

AGRI-NEWS

July 15, 1991

Grading changes will affect buying, selling slaughter cattle

Producers need to understand the proposed changes to Canada's beef grading system because those changes will affect how slaughter cattle are bought and sold says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

Major changes to the system include adding marbling and specific yield criteria notes Ron Gietz. These changes, scheduled to take effect on January 1, 1992, will affect how the beef producer does business next year he adds.

The proposed system introduces marbling into the Canadian grading system. Marbling is already included in the U.S. system, and the proposed system parallels the American definitions. The Canadian designation for absence of marbling would be B1; trace, A (U.S. Standard); slight, AA (U.S. Select); and, small, AAA (U.S. Choice).

As well, each carcass would be graded for meat yield calculated from measuring the loin-eye area, carcass weight and fat thickness. There will be three yield designations – A1, A2 and A3 – but standards for each haven't been set. One proposal is for yield breaks between A1 and A2 at 60 per cent, and between A2 and A3 at 55 per cent.

"For the producer just as important as how the system works is what will become the new bench-mark price," says Gietz. "In most markets, that's the most common grade."

If the new grading system were implemented tomorrow, over 50 per cent of Canadian fed cattle would receive an AA marbling rating. If the yield break was set at 60 per cent, over 60 per cent would grade A1 on yield. "On this basis, the AA-A1 designation could become the new bench-mark," Gietz says.

Because higher yields are clearly better than lower yields, A1 cattle would always receive a premium price over A2 and A3 cattle he says. "Currently though, there's no direct connection between the new system and railgrading. However, the Canadian Cattleman's Association has expressed a desire that the new legislation include producer payments be made on exact yield."

However, he says, there is confusion about which marbling designation will fetch the top dollar. With the current system, A1 cattle get the best price, and most of these cattle would receive an intermediate AA marbling score. "Will AAA cattle command a price premium, and if so, how large? This is one of many questions that only the market can answer. It's important to realize the forces of supply and demand are the sole factors influencing the price of beef. Grading regulations may provide a framework for trade, but they don't have a major impact on beef demand.

"For example, in Canadian and Western American retail markets, consumers have expressed an increasing preference for lean beef. These preferences have become clear in two different countries despite the completely different grading systems. It shows you can't legislate changes in beef demand," Gietz says.

Proposed grading legislation is expected to appear in the Canada Gazette next month. A 30-day period for public comment follows its publication.

Contact: Ron Gietz
427-5376

This Week

Grading changes will affect buying, selling slaughter cattle	1
Mixed blessings in cool, wet June	2
GST rules amended for custom feedlot feeds	2
Initial pasture lease survey results available	2
Strawberries featured at Brooks ASCHRC field day	3
Wet June heightens fireblight potential	3
Alberta Agriculture appointments	4
Briefs	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch
Phone: (403) 427-2121

Mixed blessings in cool, wet June

A cool, wet June has left many Alberta farmers with mixed feelings about last month's weather says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist.

"Cool temperatures have slowed the growth of annual crops and the wet, lush conditions are favorable for crop disease," says Peter Dzikowski, of the conservation and development branch in Edmonton. "As well, the ample rain has produced good growth of hay crops, but farmers can't get on the land to cut and harvest their hay before rains come again."

In many areas of the province it rained two out of every three days in June he notes. "In the last half of the month, it rained almost every day at some locations."

Rainfall totals for June varied from a high of 179.2 mm at Cardston, 196 per cent of its June normal, to a low of 47.2 mm at Drumheller, 87 per cent of its normal value for the month of June.

The foothills, southern, southeastern and northern Alberta reported well over 100 mm of rain during June. These values are 150 to 200 per cent of normal precipitation totals for the month. However, the central part of southern Alberta and areas northeast of Edmonton had lower rainfall totals. These totals ranged between 60 and 90 mm, within 25 per cent of their normal.

The average temperature for the month of June was about one degree Celsius below normal in central and southern Alberta. "This cooler weather was equivalent to only 27 growing days in June instead of 30," says Dzikowski. "As a result, crop growth and development is behind by a few days."

In the Peace and northeastern regions, June temperatures were closer to normal ranging from near normal to 0.5°C above normal.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

GST rules amended for custom feedlot feeds

Zero-rating the cost of feeds at custom feedlots will change how custom operators bill their clients says an Alberta Agriculture provincial tax specialist.

The federal Department of Finance zero-rated sales of livestock feed by custom feedlots late last month. The new rules apply only to feedlot operators considered to be farming for income tax purposes.

In the original GST rules, custom feedlots were required to calculate and charge GST on their entire invoices. "As a result GST was charged not only on the services provided, such as yardage, veterinary supplies and services, but also on the actual feed," says Merle Good of the farm business management branch in Olds.

Now, up to a maximum of 90 per cent of the total custom bill – or the portion of the bill that covers feed up to that maximum – may be zero-rated. The result is a minimum 10 per cent charge for services that would apply to all custom lots regardless of their billing practices.

"Even custom operations that bill on a cost per gain basis and don't separate the service and feed charges, will now be expected to calculate the GST on at least 10 per cent of their total invoice charge," says Good. "This will be a bookkeeping change for some operators."

Custom feedlot users will be able to recover this GST payment as an input tax credit if they are registered for the GST notes Good.

The Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association began lobbying for this change in February and says the change makes the tax equitable throughout the industry. "A significant departure from the earlier interpretation of the Act, where all custom charges – feed plus service – were GST identified, this new ruling now is consistent with the government's objective of zero-rating farmers' purchases of feed for zero-rated livestock," says Marland Larter, the association's president.

Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

Initial pasture lease survey results available

Initial results from the 1991 Alberta Agriculture grazing survey show a wide range of rental rates based on local conditions says a farm management economist.

"Grazing rates on private grass range from three dollars to $20 per cow calf pair or per animal unit month (AUM)," says Alex Ostapiuk of the farm business management branch in Olds. "The most common rates are between $10 and $15 per pair per month." The survey rates don't include GST charges he adds.

In the region Edmonton and north, rates more commonly range between $10 and $12, while southern regions are mostly in the $10 to $16 range.

"These rates reflect local conditions that include cattle numbers, available grass, grass quality and water availability," Ostapiuk says.

Provincial grazing reserves were less variable in their rates across the province he notes. West central Alberta and north ranged from $8.25 to $9.85 per AUM. In Lethbridge and Medicine Hat regions the range was higher, between $10.90 and $14.05 per AUM. He adds the prices are 3.7 to 6.5 per cent higher than they were in 1990.

Con't on page 3

The Alberta Agriculture statistics branch survey also asks questions about fence maintenance and lease formalities. This year in 66 per cent of the surveyed agreements the renter was responsible for fence maintenance costs. The landowner had complete responsibility for fencing in the other 34 per cent of agreements.

Slightly more leases were written than were verbal agreements. Written leases totalled 54 per cent and verbal ones, 46 per cent.

Contact: Alex Ostapiuk 556-4235

Strawberries featured at Brooks ASCHRC field day

Just about everything you'd ever want to know about strawberries, but might have been afraid to ask, will be featured at the 1991 Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center field day August 23.

"Our fruit program will be the center of attention for the field day displays with a huge display of strawberries and other fruit," says Janet Panford, a food scientist at the center.

Other displays will also feature strawberries. The center's food science program will highlight various processed products made from strawberries. Area district home economists will show-off "sensational strawberries" with everything imaginable made from fresh berries. As well, the Alberta Market Gardeners Association's booth will feature U-pick strawberry operations with maps to show people where they can pick their own fresh berries.

Besides strawberry displays, other fruits, potatoes, other vegetables, herbs and spices will be on display.

Demonstrations and lectures during the field day will feature home-garden strawberry production. "But strawberries aren't the only story," says Panford, "We're repeating some of last year's popular topics including composting, flower arranging and floral crafts. As well, for the first time we'll demonstrate the environmentally friendly backyard garden."

Two types of tours will be offered to field day participants. Walking tours will go through greenhouses, nurseries and research laboratories. On the wagon tours, visitors will be driven around to see experimental plots for strawberries and other fruits, vegetables, potatoes, herbs and spices.

"Visitors can also bring their gardening questions to a first time feature of our field day, a "green-thumb gardeners" booth staffed by professional horticulturists," says Panford. The booth will be staffed by Shelley Barkley, the center's information officer, Pam North horticulturist at Alberta Agriculture's Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton, Monika Korsten, Calgary horticultural information officer and Edie Stelkovis, information officer at the Municipal District of Rockyview.

Visitors are encouraged to bring plant and insect samples to the center for diagnosis at a plant pest clinic during the field day she adds. "Once again, strawberry diseases and pests will be in the spotlight, but please bring in anything you have a question about for our experts to look at."

Field corn and some food services will be available at the center. "We certainly encourage visitors to bring their own lunch and enjoy a picnic on our grounds while they take in the field day," says Panford.

For more information about the field day, contact Panford or Ron Howard at 362-3391 in Brooks.

Contact: Dr. Janet Panford 362-3391 Dr. Ron Howard 362-3391

Wet June heightens fireblight potential

June's wet weather has provided a potential for fireblight bacteria on fruit and ornamental trees says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"Wet weather coupled with warmth provides perfect conditions for fireblight," says Pam North, of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton. "Because the conditions were close to ideal for the spread of fireblight, people should start to watch for its symptoms now."

Fireblight affects many fruit bearing plants including apples, crabapples, pears, plums, saskatoons, and even raspberries. Ornamental trees such as mountain ash, hawthorn and cotoneaster are also prey to the bacteria.

The bacterial disease begins at the end of tree branches and works it way up the branches. Leaves turn reddish brown and curl up, giving them a scorched look and fireblight its name. "It's also very infectious and can be spread easily between trees by insects, wind or rain," North says.

Usually infected leaves stay on the tree, rather than falling off. Twigs and branches also turn reddish brown and crack, while fruit dries up and turns brown or black. In humid weather, infected areas may ooze droplets of a clear or amber liquid.

Pruning is the only way to control fireblight she says. Branches should be cut 25 to 45 cm below the blighted area. Cuts should be made into healthy wood. "This is a precaution in case the bacteria has moved beyond the part of the branch that looks blighted," she says. If fireblight appears to be in the tree trunk, the whole tree may have to be removed.

Pruned branches should be burned or disposed of in plastic garbage bags. Pruning shears must be disinfected after each cut. A house-hold bleach mixed in water – 100 ml in one litre of water – will work.

Fireblight can be prevented by avoiding high nitrogen fertilizers that promote susceptible succulent growth. Suckers and waterspouts are also susceptible to the disease.

Contact: Pam North 422-1789

Alberta Agriculture appointments

New district home economist in Valleyview

Valleyview's new Alberta Agriculture district home economist is no stranger to rural communities as she grew up in rural Manitoba. Carmen Andrew is also a recent graduate of the University of Manitoba with a joint bachelor degree in human ecology and education. As district home economist, Andrew provides information to farm families, and organizes courses and activities in a variety of subject areas. They range through farm management, foods and nutrition, and clothing and textiles. She will also work closely with local 4-H clubs and other rural organizations. Andrew has some experience with her duties, she spent last summer as an assistant home economist with Manitoba Agriculture and also spent several years doing volunteer work for that department. "I'm encouraging people to come in and meet me, as well call or drop by with any questions and concerns. I look forward to meeting and working with members of the Valleyview community," she says. Andrew can be reached at 524-3301.

Wainwright has new district agriculturist

Ross Hutchison has moved east down Highway 14 to Wainwright to take up duties as Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist there, after spending a year and a half working with the department in Ryley. "I enjoy working with farmers and the farm community and I look forward to meeting Wainwright and district residents both professionally and socially," he says. The farming public sees the district agriculturist as their first contact when seeking specific or detailed information for their operation, he says. As well, the job includes working with agribusiness and commodity and other agricultural organizations. He also notes, "Local urban residents also often seek horticultural information from their local district agriculturist". Hutchison spent 14 years farming in Saskatchewan after he graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1973. After selling out, he worked as an assessor for two years before coming to Alberta. He can be contacted in Wainwright at 842-7540.

Agri-News briefs

Lacombe cereal crops field day

New varieties and management will be in the spotlight August 6 at the Alberta Agriculture field crop research farm near Lacombe. The Lacombe cereal crops field day will have researchers on hand to answer producer questions. The field day is sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's Lacombe district office. For more information, call the office at 782-3301.

Alfalfa production tour July 25

The Irrigation Alfalfa Seed Producers Association is hosting a production tour of alfalfa seed in the Brooks area on July 25. The tour starts at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Centre with registration at 9 a.m. The association's research plot and a number of growers' fields are part of the tour. Topics discussed along the way will be weed control, irrigation and pollination techniques. To join the tour or for more information, call Lois Petersen in Brooks at 362-2741.

Olds College looks at composting centre feasibility

Olds College has hired an Edmonton firm to study the feasibility of a composting centre. The study is to determine if a facility could be constructed and used on the college campus as a "centre of excellence" to take on full-scale composting of municipal garbage. Some of the issues to be examined in the study are: types and sizes of composting processing methods; types of input materials; site location and preparation; environmental considerations; product disposal; and, possible funding from private sector partnerships and other sources. For more information about the study, contact Ted Sadlowski (556-8303) or Shelley Bandura (556-4611) in Olds.

4-Hers visit neighbouring provinces

Two Alberta 4-H members have gone west and another two east to participate in youth leadership programs. Wendy Taylor of Red Deer and Leah Wilkie of Byemoor are taking part in Operation Enterprise July 10 through 19, an extensive business management program aimed at helping delegates be stronger managers, make career decisions and set personal goals. Business executives are involved in group discussions, workshops and one-on-ones with delegates at the Langley based program. Laura James of Okotoks and Jason West of Radway are learning about leadership and presentation skills at the "I Dare You" program at Camp Rayner in Saskatchewan. The camp is July 14 through 20. Alberta 4-H delegates were chosen for these trips at the provincial 4-H selections program in May. Trip awards are based on 4-H and community involvement as well as interpersonal skills. For more information, contact Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist, or Janice Taylor, summer travel exchange co-ordinator, in Airdrie at 948-8510 or 948-8513.

4-H lottery winners announced

The 4-H Foundation of Alberta has concluded a successful province-wide lottery to raise funds for its centre at Battle Lake. Lue Martinell of Sundre was the grand prize winner of a $5,000 trip gift certificate. Other winners were: Dino Wylie, Lindale, 250 cc quad; Bev Jones, Balzac, computer system; Pat Wegleinter, McLaughlin, 200 cc motorbike; and, Lorraine Rutledge, Wainwright, television and VCR. Proceeds from the lottery will assist in constructing a site manager's residence and office complex at the Alberta 4-H Centre. For more information about the lottery contact Georgina Taylor in Chauvin at 858-2234, or for information about the centre, call 682-2153.

Extension council held national meeting in Edmonton

Co-operation between provinces on a regional and national basis was one of the discussions at the recent annual meeting of the Canadian Agricultural Extension Council (CAEC) in Edmonton. Provincial representatives reported on current issues and activities with Newfoundland and New Brunswick presenting their reports via teleconference. The next CAEC annual meeting will be in New Brunswick in June 1992. For more information, contact John Tackaberry, CAEC secretary treasurer, at 427-2409 in Edmonton.

Ram test station sale results

The top selling ram at the 17th annual Alberta ram test station sale also had the highest overall station index. The Suffolk owned by Brian Kure of Innisfail was sold for $800 to Walt Strand of Lethbridge. Rams were sold to buyers from British Columbia to Nova Scotia. The overall sale average price was just over $310, down from last year and most likely due to

Con't on page 6

several years of depressed market lamb prices says Kim Stanford, Alberta Agriculture provincial sheep specialist. A total of 46 rams were sold with demand strongest for yearling Rambouillets in the wool breeds test. Their average selling price was $540. "It was definitely a buyers markets with many good, performance tested rams to be had at bargain prices," she says. For more information, contact Stanford in Airdrie at 948-8517.

Hands-on farm mechanics course offered

A six month certificate program at Lakeland College offers farmers or farmers-to-be a practical farm mechanics course. Hands-on instruction is completely farm oriented. Students learn basic machinery repair, preventative maintenance and how to estimate fair costs for dealer repair. The program is offered November through April at the college's Vermilion campus. It includes diesel motors, power trains, farm machinery overhaul, basic electricity, welding, suspension steering and brakes, measuring tools and machining, hydraulics and air conditioning. Students must be at least 17 years old, and a grade 10 education is recommended. For more information, contact the college registrar at 853-8420 or 1-800-661-6490 (toll-free in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.)

AGRI-NEWS

July 22, 1991

Cowchip$ latest home study software program

Beef herd management is the focus of Alberta Agriculture's home study program's latest computer software program.

"Cowchip$ is designed to help beef producers identify ways to improve their cow calf herds," says Faye Douglas Phillips, home study co-ordinator. "Cowchip$ was developed by Alberta Agriculture's beef cattle and sheep branch and is an excellent complement to the "Beef Herd Management Reference Binder and Study Guide", which is also available from the home study program."

Records, troubleshooting and herd nutrition are the three modules currently available in cowchip$. The records module provides a format for entering information required for producers to evaluate their cow-calf herd production and management.

GOLD variables—growth, open cows, length of calving season and death loss—are used in the troubleshooting module. "Each of the GOLD production indicators is evaluated for the producer's strength and weakness as well as identifying where improvements can be made. District, regional or provincial comparisons as well as industry bench-marks are provided in the analysis," says Douglas Phillips.

A quick method for balancing or checking beef rations is in the herd nutrition module. It can calculate the nutrient values of rations based on the amount of each feed selected by the producer.

"In the future there will be an option to purchase two additional modules on marketing alternatives and herd productivity," she adds.

In order to use the Cowchip$ program, producers require an IBM-PC or IBM compatible, hard drive, 640 K internal memory of RAM and CGA graphics or better.

"The computer hardware and software won't work for you unless you also have the data to put into the modules," says Phillips. "This includes breeding, weaning dates, weights, death losses, culling practices, vaccination and other management records."

Cowchip$ is available in a three-ring binder at a cost of $150 plus GST. Additional handling charges apply if ordered from outside Alberta. To order, send a cheque made payable to the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA), 14815-119 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 2N9.

Application forms for Cowchip$ are also available from Alberta Agriculture district offices or the home study program in Edmonton by calling 427-2404.

Contact *Faye Douglas Phillips*
427-2404

Factsheets focus on planning for, hiring and keeping farm employees

Farm labor should be as carefully planned as any other input on your farm says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Your labor needs should be planned and organized in advance, just as carefully as you'd plan fertilizer for your crops or feed for your livestock. Labor is a basic input, so must be

Con't on page 2

This Week

Cowchip$ latest home study software program	1
Factsheets focus on planning for, hiring and keeping farm employees	1
Recognize garden pests to control their damage	2
Many alternatives to yard and garden pesticides	3
Pesticide safety also important in the garden	3
9th Annual crops field day at Vegreville centre	4
Briefs	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

part of your total management plan along with your time, money, land and machinery," says Jo-Ann Hall, regional family resource management specialist in Barrhead.

Hall, who also wrote a trio of factsheets covering the employer's role in supervising, recruiting, hiring, training and motivating farm employees, says planning labor is the starting point. "Even if the labor is supplied by you and your family, it should be planned. If you decide you need extra help, you then have to look at what kind of help you need." Farm labor can include full time employees as well as part-time help in peak periods or during a family holiday, or custom hiring for a specific job.

The first factsheet in the group, "Supervision: Your role as an employer" (Homedex 1834-40-1), examines a number of issues related to planning labor needs and supervisory skills. It includes five questions farm families should ask when planning labor needs.

Second in the trio is "Recruiting and Hiring Farm Employees" (Homedex 1834-40-2). Job descriptions, advertisements, interviewing, checking references and hiring are all discussed.

"The third instalment focuses on an important but often overlooked management skill, managing people after they are hired," says Hall. Titled "Training and Motivating Farm Employees" (Homedex 1834-40-3), the factsheet looks at the reasons for training including increased production and higher morale and a checklist of evaluating motivational climate.

Part of an Alberta Agriculture "profit from people power" series, the factsheets are available from the Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Contact: Jo-Ann Hall
674-8265

Recognize garden pests to control their damage

Wilting plants, yellowing leaves and holes in plants are all indications a pest could have invaded one of your garden crops says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"The assorted insects that attack vegetable crops and other plants in your yard and garden are part of gardening. Recognizing what is causing the damage and how to prevent or control that damage is an important part of growing a successful garden," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton.

Among common pests in the garden are slugs, root maggots, aphids and potato beetles she says.

Slugs eat holes in both plant leaves and fruit. "While not selective because they can be found on a variety of plants, they do have their favourites. These include soft leaved plants such as beans, lettuce, peas and cole crops as well as marigolds," says North.

The greyish-brown pest has a slimy tubular body that looks like a snail without its shell. The one to three centimetre long slugs leave a shiny wet trail on leaves where they've fed. "You can confirm you have slugs in your garden by looking at plants during their feeding times in the early morning and evening," she says.

Adequate spacing between plants is one way to control slugs. This increases air circulation, the soil dries out more and so is less pleasing to slugs. Keeping gardens weeded also gives slugs fewer places to hide.

North has a number of non-chemical suggestions for removing the pests. They can be picked by hand when small in number. If boards are placed between rows, slugs will hide under the boards, then can be removed when boards are lifted up. Another method is leaving a hollowed out potato, grapefruit or melon rind. Place cut side down in the evening and by morning slugs will be inside. The potato or fruit rind can then be disposed of she says.

A number of commercial slug baits and pellets are also available. North recommends placing baits on the soil surface and covering with a board or brick to keep them away from pets.

"The baits are poisonous to dogs and cats who will be attracted to the bait, so do be careful how you set out the bait," she says. She adds beer and yeast solutions can also be used to bait slugs.

Aphids also attack a wide variety of plants from vegetables through flowers. Aphids come in a variety of colors including green, black and pink and have a small, soft, pear-shaped bodies. They damage plants by sucking their sap. Leaves lose color, turn yellow and eventually die if not controlled.

"Look for aphids on young succulent growth, the new leaves and flower buds," says North. "They reproduce rapidly so control in early stages is very important."

One of the easiest ways to control them is hosing off plants with a strong jet of water. Another method is spraying an insecticidal soap. "Before you spray, check for ladybugs. They will control the aphids for you," she notes.

Severe infestations can be controlled with organic rotenone in dust or liquid form. Malathion or diazinon can also be used. "If you spray for aphids, make sure the product you use is registered for vegetables and follow the preharvest interval instructions," she cautions.

This same rule applies to chemical control of root maggots, check the number of days required from application until harvest when using a pesticide on a food crop.

Soil drenching with liquid diazinon is one way to control root maggots. Follow directions on the label and apply around the base of each plant. Drenches can be repeated once every seven to 10 days from late July through mid-August.

Root maggots attack all types of cole crops—broccoli, cabbage, radishes and turnip—and also onions. The adult fly

Con't on page 3

lays eggs in the soil that hatch into small white legless larvae that feed on roots.

Wilting and yellowing leaves are the first sign of root maggots, and digging up an infested plant will show very few feeder roots. Tunnelling into the edible portion of root crops will be visible.

Several non-chemical methods can control root maggots. One is wood ash sprinkled over the soil around plants. Other barriers, such as row covers and garden blankets at planting time, prevent adults from laying their eggs.

Potato beetles are also a common problem. Both adults and larvae eat leaves of host plants. One of the easiest ways to control a small area or infestation of the hard-shelled beetle is by picking them off plants by hand. Severe or large infestations can be controlled by spraying with carbaryl, diazinon, methoxychlor or organic rotenone.

An Alberta Agriculture publication can help gardeners with these and other pest problems North says. "Backyard Pest Management" (Agdex 605-2) describes insects and weeds with illustrations and also methods of prevention and control strategies. It's available by writing the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

Many alternatives to yard and garden pesticides

An arsenal of pesticides are useful, but not always necessary to control pests in your yard and garden says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"There are a number of very simple methods you can use to prevent pests and control them," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton. "These encompass the type of crops you plant, using companion planting, biological control and picking off insects by hand."

Cleanliness in the garden plot is one way to prevent pest problems she says. Keep the garden clean by removing trash and boards where insects can hide. Remove any heavily infested plants as well as weeds. "Some weeds may initially attract insects to the garden. They feed on them and then move to crops," she says.

Rotating what you plant also can help eliminate problem insects that overwinter in the soil. As well, North says try growing insect tolerant crops that aren't as likely to attract pests such as carrots, beets and beans.

Another strategy is companion planting, which is using aromatic plants to ward off insects. Flowers, such as marigolds, calendula, nasturtiums and geraniums, and herbs including garlic, sage, basil and mint can perform this function.

"For example, by alternating a cole crop such as cabbage with repellent flowers you may have fewer pest problems," she says. She cautions this method can't be relied on completely "Success of companion planting depends on many things including weather, pest populations and the particular crop cultivar. It's really important to monitor your plants."

Control of insects can also be as simple as washing them off with water. Small pests such as aphids, mites and pear slugs can be washed off with a strong stream of water. Water is especially effective as a control on trees when a high pressure spray is used she says.

Hand picking is another easy way to remove pests. This method works best with larger insects such as caterpillars, slugs and potato beetles.

Soap and water can be used to control insects, although North recommends insecticidal soap that has been formulated to kill insects. She notes this can be toxic to some plants, in particular, ferns, sweet peas and nasturtiums. The soap method is effective on soft bodied pests including aphids, small caterpillars, mites and whiteflies.

Commercial biological controls are also on the market. One is Bt, available as Organic Insect Killer Liquid and Thuricide. The bacterium is used to control the larvae of moths and butterflies including tent caterpillars and cabbage worms.

Another commercial biological control is Rotenone, made from the roots of a tropical legume. Available in powder and liquid forms, it can control currant worms, caterpillars, flea beetles and Colorado potato beetles.

Biological control includes using beneficial insects to control a pest problem she adds. "Adult ladybugs and their larvae do eat aphids in large quantities. They also eat spider mites, whiteflies and mealy bugs," North says. "While ladybugs might not eat all the aphids on a plant, they may reduce the population enough to limit damage."

Lacewings and spiders can also control destructive insects. Lacewings eat aphids and sometimes thrips and mites. Spiders are beneficial as they eat large numbers of insects.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

Pesticide safety also important in the garden

If you use pesticides in your garden, do it correctly and safely says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist

"You not only have to be aware of the hazards and use proper safety precautions, you must start by choosing the right pesticide for the particular problem you have," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton.

Con't on page 4

First, identify the insect in order choose the correct insecticide she says. "One pesticide won't control all problems, so selecting the correct product is important." As well, she notes, not all insects are harmful. Some are beneficial, so their presence may be helping to reduce infestations. Assessing the amount of damage is also important in deciding whether a pesticide is necessary. "Plants can recover from a light infestation," she says.

When purchasing pesticides, remember to read labels. The label not only tells the pesticide's use, but also gives directions and precautions. "Especially important, if you're using the pesticide on food crops, are the directions for the number of days to wait between spraying and harvesting the fruit or vegetable," she adds.

While the label lists specific precautions, North suggests wearing protective clothing when spraying pesticides. This includes wearing a long sleeved shirt, pants, coveralls, rubber boots and unlined nitrile gloves. A face mask respirator may be recommended for some pesticides to prevent inhaling fumes or dust.

Other important safety precautions are: spraying when calm, not windy; not eating, drinking or smoking when handling pesticides; showering and washing your hair after use; washing clothes worn separately from other laundry; and, thoroughly cleaning the sprayer after every use. "Alberta Agriculture district offices have brochures and other safety information related to safe handling and protective clothing," she adds.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

9th annual crops field day at Vegreville centre

Reclamation, weed control, field crop disease and insect pest research plots are all part of a tour during the ninth annual crops field day at the Alberta Environmental Centre August 1.

"Visitors will be taken on a wagon tour of the research plots beginning at 1 p.m.," says Mark Jeffers of the Vegreville facility. The program begins at 12:30 with registration and a chance to view displays.

"Our plots cover a wide variety of research activities ranging from conservation through to pest control," he says.

Showing how sites with extreme environments such as alpine ski slopes can be reclaimed with native grasses and legumes is one of the tour stops. Also in the conservation theme are plots looking at the effects of surface soil depth and compaction of subsoil on barley yields.

Field studies of plant diseases are also included in the tour. Among the crops in these field studies are alfalfa, field peas and canola. As well, insect pest problems in canola and barley will be shown.

In the area of weed control research, visitors will see field experiments on: weed competition; herbicide resistant weeds; newly registered and experimental herbicides and herbicide mixtures; competition and cultural weed control; and, biological control of Canada thistle.

"Even the after tour refreshments will be in a learning environment," says Jeffers. "They will be served in the centre's weed garden which features almost 80 weed species."

The Alberta Environmental Centre was opened in 1980 and conducts applied research for Alberta Environment and other provincial government departments and agencies. The centre is located in Vegreville, 100 km east of Edmonton on the Yellowhead highway.

For more information about the field day, contact Rita Stevens at 632-8244 or Mark Jeffers at 632-8243.

Contact: Mark Jeffers
632-8243

Agri-News briefs

Researchers finding biological controls for grasshoppers

Two groups of researchers in Saskatchewan have identified two different biological controls of grasshoppers. Researchers at the Agriculture Canada research station in Saskatoon have found a steady diet of oats can reduce grasshopper populations. Their research is continuing to determine the factor that protects the crop by increasing pest mortality, and if it can be transferred to other cereal crops, especially wheat. In Regina, University of Regina researchers may have found a biological control through a strain of *Enterobacter agglomerans* (EA) bacterium found in the grasshopper gut Natural EA is neither lethal nor disabling, but can be manipulated by genetic engineering to act as a carrier for a disabling agent introduced into grasshopper food. Research is continuing, and among other things will investigate whether the bacterium can survive in nature. For more information, contact Dr. Chris Hinks in Saskatoon at (306)975-7014 or Dr. Rod Kelin in Regina at (306)585-4768.

Red Poll club show and field day

The Alberta Red Poll Club will hold a junior heifer show and field day July 27 at the Willow Cattle Centre farm near Ponoka. Hosted by Roger and Jackie Fleming and family, the day starts with a pancake breakfast and morning activities including a showmanship workshop. For more information, contact Jackie Fleming at 783-5951 or Lorraine McRorie at 954-3943.

CPIC 1991 conference Sept. 15-18 in Regina

Achieving the balance between high tech and sustainable agriculture is the theme of the 1991 Crop Protection Institute of Canada's (CPIC) annual conference September 15 through 18 in Regina. Among topics for discussion are food quality and the regulatory process, real or perceived hazards with food and emerging technologies. For more information, contact the CPIC office in Etobicoke at (416)622-9771.

AGRI-NEWS

July 29, 1991

CITT decision good news for Alberta beef producers

A continued countervail on European Community (EC) manufacturing beef is good news for the Alberta industry.

"Canadian beef producers were anxiously waiting the Canadian International Trade Tribunal's (CITT) decision," says Nithi Govindasamy, assistant director of Alberta Agriculture's trade policy secretariat. "But now are pleased that the threat of subsidized exports won't happen."

First imposed on July 25, 1986, the duties vary between 70 and 90 cents per pound, depending on the subsidy level. The CITT ruled last week imports of the highly subsidized EC beef would hurt the Canadian industry, so extended the countervailing duties that were due to expire on July 25. In Canadian trade law, countervailing duties automatically expire after five years unless they are reviewed.

Govindasamy says the tribunal reasoned subsidized imports would resume if the countervailing duty was removed. "The EC has surplus beef production through its agricultural support programs. Before the countervailing duty was applied, almost 25,000 tonnes of EC beef was dumped in Canada during 1984. Given the surplus, there was every likelihood those export levels would start again.

"Those volumes of low priced foreign manufacturing beef would have had an adverse effect on fresh beef products produced and sold in Canada, affecting the industry from cow-calf operators through to our packers."

Reacting to this threat to their industry, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, with support from the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments, petitioned the CITT to continue the countervail. Alberta's Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley says he is pleased with the result.

"Our participation underscores Alberta's commitment to ensuring a level playing field for Alberta products and to fostering a healthy and dynamic value-adding sector. The livestock industry in Alberta is the one sector which has been spared the ravages from the subsidy war between the EC and the U.S.," he says.

He adds the CITT's decision affirms Alberta's view the EC's Common Agricultural Policy is in structural crisis, with no relief from mounting surpluses evident in the foreseeable future.

"The decision also delivers a clear message to the EC—either reform your protectionist policy mechanisms or face further retaliation in international markets," says Shirley McClellan, associate minister.

AUG - 6 1991

Govindasamy says he anticipates the EC will press for a GATT resolution. It challenged the 1986 countervail implementation to GATT. In 1987 a GATT panel ruled the Canadian Cattlemen's Association had no legal standing in the case since its members produced cattle and not beef. Canada declined to adopt the panel report claiming it ruled on a narrow technicality and didn't appreciate the realities of Canadian beef production and trade.

Contact: *Nithi Govindasamy* 427-2637 *Darcy Willis* 427-2637

This Week

CITT decision good news for Alberta beef producers	1
"V" ditches erosion invitation	2
Not all salts created equal	2
4-H heifer show draws record participation	3
How to fight lawn fairy ring	4
Briefs	5
Coming agricultural events notice	6

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

"V" ditches erosion invitation

Building a "V" ditch on a rolling field this fall is a direct invitation for erosion during spring runoff says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Erosion problems are often overlooked because of the quick water removal these ditches provide as snow melts," says Neil MacAlpine, farm water management engineer. "After ditches do this job during snowmelt, they are cultivated through and seeded. This process covers up signs of erosion damage but it doesn't reverse the damage."

"V" ditches are usually constructed in the fall after harvest. "They make sense in flat areas of fields to remove the last remains of snowmelt," says Paul Muyers, an engineering technologist in training (ETT) with the department, "But, their use has moved out of the flat areas of the Municipal District of Sturgeon to the hills in the counties of Leduc, Strathcona and Barrhead."

Erosion problems are particularly significant when "V" ditching is used on field slopes that are too steep he adds. On rolling or undulating fields the concentrated flow of water in "V" ditches reaches too high a velocity for bare soil—greater than one metre per second—and soil is readily eroded and carried down slope on the field or becomes sediment pollution in creeks and streams.

An example of this type of erosion damage was seen in a 1600 foot long, three foot wide "V" ditch used near Beaumont in 1990. If an average of two to three inches of topsoil was lost over its entire length, the total amount of topsoil lost ranged between 25 and 30 tons per ditch in the spring runoff. This doesn't take into account additional losses from wind and other water erosion.

"Considering it takes an entire year to make one-eighth of an inch of topsoil, it would take more than 25 years to replace the lost soil," says MacAlpine.

Topsoil isn't the only loss. Its loss decreases crop yields and ultimately reduces farmer profits. By adding fertilizer crop yields can return to close to normal, but not to the same degree as before the soil was eroded. And, in the long run, he adds, the ditches can become major washouts that equipment can't pass over and where crop can no longer grow.

Instead of "V" ditching to remove snowmelt, excess water on rolling land should be given a safe place to flow such as grassed waterways MacAlpine says. Grassed waterways should have a wide flat bottom with shallow side slopes. This allows machinery to pass over and also minimizes erosion.

"As well as safely moving spring snowmelt, these channels take relatively little land out of cultivation," he adds.

"V" ditching can be used successfully on other types of land. The area to be drained should be less than 40 acres and field slopes shouldn't be greater than two feet in 100 feet. "Past experience will also tell the farmer if this is a safe, non-eroding practice," MacAlpine says.

For more information about grassed waterways, contact the engineering staff at Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch in Edmonton at 422-6530.

Contact: *Neil MacAlpine* *422-6530* *Paul Muyres* *422-6530*

Not all salts created equal

Spending an extra dollar or two on a bag of fortified salt may be the difference between a healthy, growthy animal and one that's an economic liability says an Alberta Agriculture ruminant nutritionist.

"Giving your cattle salt and trace minerals need to be part of a balanced trace mineral feeding program. Providing cattle with the right salt with required levels of trace minerals is an effective feed method, and they need to be fed continuously, not just during the winter feeding period," says Barry Yaremcio. "Trace mineral shortages are linked to reproductive performance and growth," he adds.

Alberta Agriculture has a large data bank of information on the trace mineral content of various feeds. From these test results, guidelines have been developed to indicate what a fortified trace mineralized salt should contain to meet cattle's needs.

Yaremcio says producers need to take a few extra minutes to examine the next block or bag of salt they buy for recommended trace minerals. "If your salt doesn't have them, then try a new salt or a new supplier," he says.

Today's market gives producers a wide range of salt choices in a number of types and forms, he adds, but caution is necessary when choosing a particular product. Development of fortified trace mineral salts brought an even greater product diversity to the market place. Some salts are available with no or low trace minerals levels, while others have suitable levels of copper, manganese, zinc and selenium for Alberta conditions. "Read the tag and compare trace mineral levels in salt products, because there are huge differences between products. See what and how much is actually included and what isn't," he says.

Salt itself should be a minimum of 90 per cent of the content. Cobalt, iodine, copper, manganese, zinc and selenium are all essential and must be in the total diet of the herd. Recommended ranges of trace mineral concentration are: cobalt, 40 to 60 mg/kg; iodine, 100 to 200 mg/kg; copper 2,500 to 4,000 mg/kg; manganese, 7,500 to 10,000 mg/kg; zinc, 8,000 to 12,000 mg/kg; and, selenium, 40 to 80 mg/kg.

"If not provided in the salt, these trace minerals should be provided from other feed sources," he notes.

"Because there are so many types of salt available, producers might want to discuss their salt or mineral feeding program with their local district agriculturist, regional livestock

Con't on page 3

specialist or a qualified nutritionist to determine what product would work best for them," he adds.

A cow on pasture will usually consume between 35 and 42 grams of salt daily. One way for producers to monitor their herd is the general guideline that a 100-cow herd should consume a 25 kg bag of salt in a week.

Producers should keep a record of the salt their herd consumes he advises. Record the number of salt bags fed to the herd on a calendar kept specifically for that purpose in a salt shed.

"If the animals aren't consuming enough salt, it may be necessary to improve the 'taste' or consumption rates by mixing in a bit of dry molasses or grain," he says. "In some situations, cattle won't eat enough salt and the producer will have to use other methods of trace mineral supplementation."

Yaremcio notes cows will eat 25 to 30 per cent more salt if its provided in loose rather than block form. "Unfortunately, loose salt is more prone to weather damage, so a good salt-mineral feeder is necessary to prevent losses from wind and rain.

"But it's better to put up with a bit of weather related loss than provide a type of salt that doesn't dissolve in the rain. Salt that doesn't dissolve in the rain will also be resistant to a cow's tongue licking it."

Retained placentas and extended calving seasons are both first signs of a trace mineral deficient herd. Calf survival at birth and subsequent growth are also affected by trace mineral deficiencies.

Contact: Barry Yaremcio
427-6361

4-H heifer show draws record participation

More and more Alberta 4-H club members are coming to the annual provincial heifer show and judging contest says Alberta Agriculture's provincial 4-H livestock specialist.

A total of 172 4-H members representing 61 clubs brought 182 head of cattle to the 15th anniversary show in Bashaw. They took part in grooming, judging and conformation classes.

"We saw another growth in the number of participants in 1991," says Henry Wiegman. "The last two years we've had just over 140 4-H members participate. I think the enthusiasm for this show is an indication of the strength of the cattle industry, and also its future."

Wiegman also notes the number of former winners at the provincial show who return to be show judges. "The overall judging winner is always invited back to be the junior conformation judge. This year that was Tova Place of Nanton. As well, a number of former 4-Hers and heifer show participants were judges for grooming, judging and freshman classes."

The large number of participants made for some large classes that were split, such as team grooming which attracted 55 entries. Eventual winners were: Kristy and Kurt Trefiak of Edgerton (junior); Kim Svitich and Jolleen Synder of Chipman (intermediate); and, Cathy and Jessie Penosky of Botha (senior).

Eleven year old Kurt Trefiak was at his first provincial show and took home two more awards besides the team grooming win with his sister. Trefiak was grand champion in the junior freshman competition. His showmanship ability also won junior showmanship first place honors.

Wiegman says the special freshman classes at the show give first time provincial competitors a real feel for the show. "The member is eased into the feel of the show by having the opportunity to be judged on their show skills as well as their heifer or cow's conformation. It's very important these rookies to this competition aren't overwhelmed by the sheer size of the provincial show and can have a positive first time experience."

The senior freshman supreme champion was Kim Lundy of Coronation with Jason Svitich of Chipman, the reserve champion. Multiwinner Trefiak was junior champion with Tracy Gardner of the Eagle Multi Club from the Olds area, the reserve champion.

Along with the grooming competition, judging contests were also on the slate for the show's first day. All of the high point individual winners—Carrie Cholak of Lamont, Geoff Hoar of the Knee Hill Valley Club in the Innisfail area and Egan Brockhoff of Edberg—were part of the first place judging teams. Their fellow team members respectively were Mark Nahnybida, Greg Hoar and Jay Brockhoff. The high point show ring judging team were Scott Swanek of the Lethbridge-Coaldale club paired with Michelle Porter of Duffield and the Spruce Grove Beef Club.

Carrie Cholak, 12, was another multiwinner. She was also reserve champion junior showman.

Intermediate showmanship honors went to Aaron Grant of the Bow-Inn Club from the Bowden Innisfail area, with Stephen Cholak of Lamont in second place. Robyn Pipke of the East Ponoka club won champion status in the senior showmanship competition with Bobbi-Gayle Hosegood of the West Didsbury Club in second place.

Pipke went on to capture the reserve supreme purebred championship with her Angus yearling heifer. Supreme champion honors went to Alison Fehlauer's shorthorn heifer. Fehlauer is from Leduc.

A Limousin cross yearling shown by Victoria Belanger of Edgerton was the supreme champion crossbred at the show. Curtis Sinnott's three year old Hereford cross was the reserve supreme champion. Sinnott is from the Foothills Club in the Pincher Creek area.

For the fourth consecutive year the St. Paul 4-H Multi Club took home the club herdsmanship award. "It was a tough and

Continued on page 4

close competition this year, as close as it's ever been, with only three points separating the top from third place," he says. The Timber Trails 4-H Club from the Pincher Creek area was second and South Barrhead was third.

This year's competition began on a sombre note with a moment of silence for Eric Olde-Heuvel. The 18-year old was killed by lightning the day before he was to come to the competition. His fellow Sangudo Beef Club members all withdrew from the provincial show.

Alberta Treasury Branch was the primary sponsor for the first day of competition including judging, grooming and freshman classes. The prime sponsor for the conformation classes was Shur-Gain. Show sponsors also included the host Bashaw and District Agricultural Society, Alberta Agriculture and Agriculture Canada.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
427-2541

How to fight lawn fairy ring

One of the most common problems people battle in their lawns is the fight to control fairy ring.

People often first recognize the fungal disease as small tan mushrooms growing in a circle. But, the first sign of disease is when very dark green colored grass grows quickly in a circular or semi circular pattern says Don Geddes, an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticultural Centre.

"The mushrooms are the fruiting stage of the fungus and usually appear during or after rainy weather," he says.

There isn't a particular pesticide control for fairy ring, so digging out the infected area is the only way to get rid of the fungus Geddes says. If the sod is stripped off, an abundance of greyish-white strands are visible. This is the mycelium, or vegetative growth, of the fungus. All the mycelium must be removed or the fungus will grow again. The mycelium can be a few centimetres in the soil, or go as deep as 30 cm.

"To ensure you remove all the mycelium as you dig out the ring, you should also dig the area 30 cm from the inner and outer edges of the ring," he says. "It's also important not to drop any of the infected soil on the healthy part of your lawn."

Geddes says if the ring can't be dug right away, symptoms of the fungus can be masked. If only the dark green rings are present, the entire lawn can be fertilized and watered. For more severe cases, a "poke and soak" method can disguise fairy ring. Use a garden fork to make holes 25 cm deep and 10 to 15 cm apart throughout the ring and 30 cm beyond the inside and outside edges. Put a small amount of liquid soap in the holes. The soap is a wetting agent to help water penetrate the dry waxy fungal layer. Then, water heavily every second day until the ground is soggy. The fungus cuts off the water supply to the grass roots, so heavy watering encourages the grass to grow back.

Contact: Don Geddes
422-1789

Agri-News briefs

Alberta 4-Hers off to California

Robin Schneider of Bow Island and Carmen Knowles of Byemoor leave for California today to take part in a week long exchange. The exchange is a new one offered as a trip award during the provincial 4-H selections program. "The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce is continuing its 23-year sponsorship of an American exchange, switching this year from an Indiana conference to the annual California 4-H leadership conference," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist. The bank had sponsored an Indiana exchange since 1968. The Alberta delegates will stay with a California host family and then join that state's delegates at their 4-H leadership conference in Oakland.The conference is designed to develop leadership skills. Environmental awareness and responsibilities will also be discussed through lectures, group discussions, workshops and one-on-one communication. Alberta's delegates will return from Oakland on August 6. They were chosen for the exchange at the 1991 provincial 4-H selections program in May. Trip awards are based on community and 4-H involvement as well as their interpersonal skills. For more information, contact Stark in Airdrie at 948-8510, or Janice Taylor, summer travel and exchange co-ordinator at 948-8513.

Pulse harvest day tour August 13

A pulse harvest day tour will be held at the St. Denis Seed Farm near Legal on August 13. Presented by Zone 3 of Alberta Pulse Growers Commission, the tour will include a pea harvesting demonstration, a harvesting equipment display and a farm safety demonstration. Participants are asked to preregister with the Alberta Agriculture Morinville district office by calling 939-4351. For more information, call Cathy Kehoe also at 939-4351 in Morinville.

Coming agricultural events

- Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in **September, October, November or later in 1991, or in 1992?** Please state the name of the event.

- What are the dates?

- Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

- Please give the **name, city or town,** and **phone number** of a contact person for each event listed.

- This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by August 21, 1991 to:

Agri-News Editor
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming agricultural events is published four times a year in Agri-News. The next list will be September 2, 1991)

AGRI-NEWS

August 5, 1991

Crops of Alberta display open house August 15 and 16

Sustainable agriculture is in the spotlight at this year's Crops of Alberta display in Edmonton.

"The first 18 plots in the annual display include examples of sustainable practices," says co-ordinator Curtis Kaup. "They include living mulches, annual forages, green manures, reclamation grasses, biological controls, various seeding rates and wild flowers."

As well, the theme plots are enclosed on the south and west by annual windbreak plants of flax, corn and sunflowers.

The one acre Crops of Alberta display, situated outside Alberta Agriculture's Edmonton headquarters building, is designed to promote agricultural awareness and the diversity of crops grown by Alberta farmers. In addition to the 1991 theme plots, there are 200 other plots. Forages, cereals, special crops, oilseeds, horticultural crops and herbs make up the majority of the display plots. Currently used varieties as well as newly released varieties are represented.

"Of special note are eight plots of ancestral wheats and six plots of dry flower varieties. The dry flowers can be grown as bedding plants, for fresh cut flowers and for winter bouquets," he says.

A special open house will be held August 15 and 16, but visitors are invited to come by the display anytime Kaup says. "The best viewing is from now through mid-September. Signs beside each plot identify the crop and explain its uses, so people can explore the plots on their own. Guided tours are also available."

Crops of Alberta is a joint project of Alberta Agriculture's crop protection branch and the plant science department in the University of Alberta's agriculture and forestry faculty. The display has been presented annually since 1985.

For guided tours and more information, call Kaup at 427-7098.

Contact: Curtis Kaup
427-7098

Weigh facts, not perceptions of food safety

Canadians today have the advantage of the safest food supply in history and are healthier than ever before, but are also more concerned about the risks associated with what they eat.

"It's somewhat contradictory, given our health and the abundance of safe food, but people do appear to be more concerned about the safety of their food," says Aileen Whitmore, Alberta Agriculture provincial foods and nutrition specialist.

"Often though, the risk a consumer perceives is considered harmless by a scientist. What consumers need to know how to do is weigh their concerns, or the perceived risks, against the real risks. For the agriculture and food industry, this means being in tune with consumers and finding ways to give them information to ease their fears," she adds.

Whitmore says risk perception studies are now attempting to understand why people's concerns are increasing, and why perceptions are so often different than what the experts say people should be concerned about. The concerns may be misperceptions, but to change attitudes there must be

Con't on page 2

This Week

Crops of Alberta display open house August 15 and 16	1
Weigh facts, not perceptions of food safety	1
Black-tilled fallow too costly	2
Camrose study finds extension has role in production improvements	2
45th annual 4-H dairy show attracts a dozen clubs	3
Cadogan 4-Her Grant MacEwan conservation award recipient	4
Alberta Agriculture appointments	5
Briefs	6

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

knowledge about why people don't understand or are confused," she says.

She suggests one factor contributing to misconceptions is science's ability to detect extremely minute levels of poisonous substances. Parts per billion, trillion and even smaller amounts of chemicals in water, food and air can now be detected. "The perception is that any and every chemical is bad, no matter how slight the concentration may be. This overlooks the general rule of the dose makes the poison. Common foods such as carrots, parsley, cabbage, broccoli and raspberries contain natural pesticides in levels much higher than the amounts of manmade pesticide in plant foods."

All plants produce their own natural pesticides to protect them from fungi, insects and predators. Every plant species contains its own set of toxins, usually a few dozen. Tens of thousands of these natural pesticides have been discovered.

Modern technologies also play a role in misperception she says. "Most powerful technologies have serious consequences, if something goes wrong. If we lack familiarity about a technology, we are suspicious and cautious about accepting its risks. People have been fearful of the steam engine, the automobile and flying because of associated risks. First-hand experience has made everyone more comfortable because now they can weigh the real and perceived risks."

Perceptions are also fuelled by sensitivity to particular issues. "Risk problems are brought to the public eye and kept there by increasingly well-funded and sophisticated interest groups. Unfortunately some of these groups base their campaigns on emotion rather than reason," she says.

"There's also a frustration that as individuals we can't control risks like pollution, pesticides and food additives, the way we can control risks by wearing a seat belt or getting more exercise. So, some concerns come from this sense of helplessness."

Contact: Aileen Whitmore
427-2412

Black-tilled fallow too costly

Neither the agriculture industry nor individual producers can afford the cost of black-tilled summerfallow reminds an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"It's something to keep in mind if you'd planned to summerfallow this summer," says Grant Gillund, northeast regional soils specialist. "Black summerfallow has been the single most devastating farming practice utilized in Canada since this country was opened up.

"Quite rightly it's been open to a lot of criticism, so even if you feel summerfallow is necessary, think double long on how you're going to summerfallow."

Gillund says the practice of black-tilled summerfallow ranks up with soil stripping and selling top soil as detrimental soil management. "Especially, given the old doctrine of cultivate, cultivate, cultivate, and the blacker the field for the longest period as the ultimate standard of excellence."

Today it's recognized both that attitude and practice were wrong. Black, over-tilled fields are an invitation for erosion and ensure a lower level of soil organic matter. "This doesn't mean all summerfallow is bad and should be outlawed, but it does mean producers need to look at how much, why and how they summerfallow," he says.

Summerfallow does have an important role in dry areas as a method of accumulating enough moisture to grow a crop. However, Gillund points out that some dryland areas do receive enough moisture that summerfallowing isn't required. For example, around Vegreville the average yearly precipitation is just over 40 cm, and about 18 cm is during the growing season.

"This is more than adequate moisture to grow a crop without having to resort to summerfallowing. In fact, producers in the County of Minburn have proven that to themselves. They've reduced fallowed acres from 26 per cent in 1977 to 12 per cent in 1990 by using longer rotations and continuous cropping," he says.

Another reason for summerfallowing is weed control, but Gillund says conservation fallow systems using herbicides are proving more effective. "Years ago, tillage was the only method of weed control short of hand rouging a crop. Today, most weeds can be controlled with in-crop herbicides.

"Even if the weed problem is so serious it warrants leaving the field fallow for a year, using herbicides has proven much more effective than black-tilled summerfallow. And, with diesel fuel prices starting to push cents per litre, conservation fallow systems are looking better and better from a cost efficiency point of view."

Contact: Grant Gillund
853-8109

Camrose study finds extension has role in production improvements

An Alberta Agriculture study in the County of Camrose shows beef producers can improve their production efficiency and economic performance when they are presented relevant information about their own herd.

In 1987 cow-calf producers in the central Alberta county were surveyed about their production practices by beef management specialist John Basarab and district agriculturist George Rock. As a follow-up, survey participants received a management report on their herd. That same year an Alberta Agriculture extension program aimed at improving productivity and income was launched. Then, a second survey of

Con't on page 3

producers was conducted last year to see if any changes in management practices had occurred. "Our aim was to get a feel of area producers' general management behavior as well as how they responded to industry innovations," says Rock. "We found that extension work played a role in changing the behavior of a significant number of cow-calf operators who participated in both surveys. As a result of changed management practices, the cow-calf operator had better production efficiency and made more money."

As part of the study, all producers who replied to the 1987 survey received management reports based on their replies. GOLD variables—growth, open cows, length of calving season and death loss—were identified giving producers key indicators of their herd performance. All the variables are directly related to producer controlled conditions such as health care, forage management, ration formulation and marketing. After the 1990 survey, changes in the GOLD variables as well as measures of production efficiency were examined.

"What we found was that the producers who took part in both surveys typically improved their profits by about $1,500 through increased calf weights," he says. "The cumulative effect shows up in the local economy. Beef cow-calf operations are an integral part of one-third of farm operations in the district providing approximately $13 million of income in the county."

Survey results were compared between producers who didn't fill out a survey in either 1987 or 1990 and those who took part in both surveys. Feeding practices between the two groups varied very little. However, the group who took part in the early survey, received a management report and answered the second survey, did more pregnancy tests, bull evaluations and fed replacement heifers separately.

These three management practices could be singled out as providing better production efficiency in terms of the pounds of calf weaned per cow wintered says Rock. "Together pregnancy checking, bull evaluation and feeding replacement heifers separately, improved the average to a 497 pound weaned calf. Without any of the three management practices, the statistical average dropped to 446 pounds."

"This is typical of good management," he adds, "Not any one factor is as important as a combination of appropriate practices for an individual herd."

The percentage of calves weaned per cow wintered also increased in the twiced surveyed group, from 91.1 per cent to 92.7 per cent. In the one-time survey group, that total dropped from 91.1 to 89.3 per cent.

Rock describes extension's role as a catalyst for a change in management practices. "Extension information and programs quantified or confirmed some suspicions farmers had about a particular management practice. Awareness about the potential benefits of making certain changes certainly had an effect on a group of producers who were change oriented. Problems varied from farm to farm, but when those change oriented managers were provided with information specific to their farm, they integrated it into their beef herd management."

From his own perspective he says the study reinforces the work he does as district agriculturist. "The bottom line is that producers trust their district agriculturist to deliver beneficial information."

The research team was also very pleased with the participation rate. Just over 50 per cent of area producers took part in the first survey and 45 per cent participated in the follow-up survey.

Contact: *George Rock* *679-1210* *John Basarab* *427-5083*

45th annual 4-H dairy show attracts a dozen clubs

The 45th anniversary edition of the provincial 4-H dairy show and team judging competition brought a dozen clubs and about 70 4-Hers to Red Deer.

For the second consecutive year Lexi Wright collected a number of individual honors at the show, as well as serving as junior judge in the conformation competition.

Wright, a senior member from the CDC Club (Crossfield, Didsbury, Carstairs), was the first place senior and top overall individual in the clipping competition. In the judging competition she was high overall for judging reasons, combined with Darren Hipkin of East Edmonton to win team show ring judging and was a member of the high overall team first place winners.

Wright joined senior conformation judge Dave Chalack in chosing Tanya Van Sickle's calf as the show's supreme grand champion. Van Sickle is a senior member in the Mountain View 4-H Dairy Club.

Hipken, another multiple winner, was the reserve supreme champion with his intermediate calf.

Other judging winners were: Suzanne Lausen, Mountain View, junior individual; Laura Jeffery, CDC, intermediate and high overall individual; Martin Staub, Rollyview, senior; and, CDC high overall team.

In the clipping competition the top competitors were: Jason Lausen, Mountain View, junior individual, and Casey Klys, CDC, intermediate individual.

Cherhill's Twilite 4-H Dairy Club won the club herdsmanship award for the third consecutive year. First place in the club herd category went to Mountain View.

"The conformation show was particular busy as the show doubled as a qualifying event for the Western Canada Classic. Over 80 head of dairy cattle were shown by 4-H members." says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist.

For complete show results, contact Wiegman in Edmonton at 427-2541.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman* *427-2541*

Cadogan 4-Her Grant MacEwan conservation award recipient

Lisa Nelson received a very special 18th birthday present, notification she was the 1991 Grant MacEwan Conservation Award winner.

The award has been presented annually to an Alberta 4-H conservation camper who best spreads the conservation message after attending the provincial 4-H conservation camp. Nelson of Cadogan was presented with a sculptured plaque and $300 at the finale of the 1991 camp last week.

Since attending the 1990 camp, Nelson actively promoted conservation in a number of ways. She delivered talks at area schools and her 4-H light horse club. She set up booths at the Provost Community Fair and Provost High School Fair, and received a first place award at the latter event. Two of her articles were published in the Provost News. A strong supporter and organizer of the area's toxic waste round-up, she is a member of local environmental clubs. She also lobbied the provincial environment minister, writing of her vision of Alberta.

"I want to pass on to future generations just how important it is to respect our environment. I want to pass on something that is valuable," Nelson says. She plans on attending Camrose Lutheran College to start work on a degree in elementary education this fall.

One of the over 60 participants at this year's conservation camp will be the recipient of the 1992 award. Most delegates are from Alberta, but participants also hail from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Montana. Each delegate studies two of five conservation areas, choosing from: water, soil, range, forestry, and fish and wildlife. They are also encouraged to show conservation leadership when they go home.

The camp, held at the Alberta 4-H centre at Battle Lake, is designed to help 4-H members develop an awareness and appreciation for the natural environment says Henry Wiegman, a specialist with Alberta Agriculture's 4-H branch. This year was the camp's 26th year of operation.

The Grant MacEwan Conservation Award is named for a former Alberta Lieutenant-governor and longtime conservation champion. The annual camp and award are sponsored by Alberta Power Limited and Transalta Utilities Corporation and administered by Alberta Agriculture's 4-H branch.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman* *427-2541*
Lisa Nelson *753-6767*
Mona Hari, Transalta Utilities *498-7023*

Alberta Agriculture appointments

New district home economist in Provost

Glynis Falloon is the new Alberta Agriculture district home economist in Provost. A 1987 graduate of the University of Manitoba's bachelor of human ecology program, she has spent the last four years in Calgary working in positions related to vocational instruction and job placement. Falloon grew up on a grain farm between the southwestern Manitoba communities of Foxwarren and Binscarth. She says she is looking forward to her new duties as a resource person for farm families in the Provost area. "I will be meeting and getting to know the community in a variety of different ways in the next weeks through workshops, meetings, telephone calls and office visits," she says. As district home economist she will provide farm families with information on a variety of topics from farm financial management through food and nutrition, as well as work with area 4-H clubs. Falloon can be contacted in Provost at 753-6871.

New 4-H specialist appointed

An Alberta 4-H alumnus is the new provincial 4-H personal development specialist. Arron Madson brings a wealth of 4-H experience along with a joint degree in communications, and leisure, tourism and society from the University of Calgary to his new position. In his new role Madson will co-ordinate programs and services related to personal development of Alberta 4-H members and their leaders. "I'm very familiar with the 4-H program, and excited about the challenges of my job," he says. Madson was an eight year 4-H club member and has been an alumni member since 1986. He was also a regional 4-H assistant in Airdrie between May 1990 and March 1991 and spent the summers of 1987 through 1989 as a provincial 4-H summer staff member. Born in Saskatchewan, Madson was raised on a ranch in the Sundre area. He can be reached in Edmonton at 422-4444.

Agri-News briefs

Range minerals also need supplementing

Pasture forages are good sources of calcium, phosphorus and some trace minerals, but today's high producing livestock need mineral supplements says an Alberta Agriculture regional livestock specialist. "Calcium and phosphorus minerals are required to cover deficiencies in pasture dry matter consumed, especially as their content in grass declines through the summer," says Rob Hand. For example, grass and legume phosphorus content is relatively high in the spring, but declines as the plant matures. By mid July, or earlier, the phosphorus content may be below a breeding cow's requirements, about midway through the breeding season. "It's been demonstrated supplying phosphorus to breeding cows on pasture will increase fall pregnancy rates from 10 to 15 per cent," he says, "and, gains for grazing yearlings can also be increased." Range minerals should contain equal parts calcium and phosphorus. Range mineral can be purchased with or without added salt. Either the salt or range mineral should contain necessary trace minerals including selenium, cobalt, copper, zinc, and manganese. For more information, contact Hand in Barrhead at 674-8248, any Alberta Agriculture regional livestock specialist or local district agriculturist.

ACFA feedlot school and tour August 29-30

The Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association will hold its annual feedlot school and tour August 29 and 30 in Lethbridge. Day one at Lethbridge Community College includes discusssion of common feedlot diseases, feedlot efficiencies, backgrounding, sorting cattle for sale, a U.S. cattle outlook and a feedgrains outlook. Day two is a tour of three feedlots plus demonstrations of processing procedures and spaying and aborting heifers. As an added feature, feedlot equipment and farm machinery will be displayed during breaks. Registrations are limited to 140. For more information, call the ACFA office in Calgary at 250-2509.

AG1.1.691

AGRI-NEWS

August 12, 1991

Crop heat stress came with hot, dry July

Crop growing conditions deteriorated as hot, dry weather extended throughout the whole month of July in most parts of Alberta says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist.

"Unfortunately, hot and dry weather was experienced by most Alberta farmers during most of the month of July," says Peter Dzikowski of the conservation and development branch in Edmonton.

"With the exception of west central Alberta and the northern Peace River region, all areas needed at least one to two inches of rain before the end of July to complete head filling," adds Allan Howard, soil moisture specialist in Lethbridge.

Serious soil moisture deficiencies could be found northeast of Edmonton he says, where crop losses had likely already occurred. Among the hardest hit areas are Paradise Valley, Two Hills, Smoky Lake and Vegreville. "Crop losses are also expected in the Westlock area north of Edmonton and possibly, too, in the Fahler area in the Peace and the Strathmore area east of Calgary," Howard says.

Soil moisture levels were also low in southern Alberta by the end of July, although crops were in better condition than in northeastern Alberta. Stress is expected to reduce yields from above average to near average. He notes an early August general rain did help to improve conditions a little.

After a cool, wet May and June, farmers needed warm and dry conditions to speed up crop growth and to harvest their hay. However, the hot, dry weather stretched through July and into early August causing crop heat stress.

"The spring weather—cool and wet—helped to create shallow rooting depths in most crops which resulted in crops using less of the available moisture when there was a prolonged dry period," says Howard.

"With these sorts of crop conditions, every week without precipitation reduces the yield quality," notes Dzikowski.

July rainfall was generally below normal in most of Alberta adds Dzikowski. Exceptions were the foothills and some areas of central and northern Alberta that all reported near normal to above normal rain—in the range of 70 to 120 mm—during July. However, the rest of the totals across the province were much lower, in a range between 15 and 40 mm, about 20 to 80 per cent of their normal July precipitation.

Rainfall totals varied from a high of 140.6 mm at Sedgewick, 203 per cent of its July normal, to a low of 19 mm at the Edmonton International Airport, 21 per cent of its normal value for the month of July.

The average temperature for the month of July in northern Alberta was near normal to one degree above normal. In central Alberta temperatures were one half to one and one half degrees above the July normal. Temperatures were within one half degree of normal in southern Alberta.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski* 422-4385 *Allan Howard* 381-5861

This Week

Crop heat stress came with hot, dry July	1
Low initial payments leave room for adjustments	1
Calf prices expected above 1990 prices	2
When to sell pasture feeder cattle	2
Rejuvenating flock possible strategy for lamb market upswing	3
Applications for fertilizer program still being accepted	3
Alberta Agriculture appointments	5
Briefs	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Low initial payments leave room for adjustments

While the initial Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) prices have been set at 16 year lows, grain farmers can probably look forward to a final payment says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Improvements in international wheat prices over the coming year should allow room for a final payment," says Charlie Pearson. The CWB set the 1991-92 initial payment for #1 Canadian Western Red Spring Wheat at $95 per tonne, down $40 per tonne from the previous crop year.

Pearson forecasts the most likely Alberta total CWB payment will be between $90 and $105 for #1 CWRS wheat. He pegs #3 CWRS payments as most likely in the $85 to $100 per tonne range. He estimates total durum wheat payments will be in the same range to $10 lower than those for hard red spring wheat. Other classes of wheat, including winter, prairie spring, utility and soft white spring, should have total payments similar to #3 CWRS he says.

Canadian wheat production is estimated to be down 10 per cent from 1990 he notes.

World wheat production is currently estimated as down six per cent from last year's record crop. However, it would still be the second largest wheat crop in history. Consumption is estimated to be down two per cent, reflecting a decline in livestock feed usage.

"Also interacting with the supply demand balance are continued export subsidies. These subsidies have dropped to about $85 per tonne, down $10 in the last quarter. As well, favorable weather for northern hemisphere grain production and concerns about major importers' ability to pay continue to offset the positive price news of a tighter 1991-92 world wheat supply demand balance," he says.

The world coarse grain situation will also be tight in the coming crop year and international barley prices are expected to remain similar to last year's he says.

Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

Calf prices expected above 1990 prices

Extension of the countervailing duties on EC beef imports has given Alberta cattle producers one less worry this fall, and hope for higher prices for their fall feeder cattle says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Producers still face a number of factors that will influence their profits, but the extended countervail certainly makes the picture brighter," says Ron Gietz. Among the other factors are barley prices, the fed cattle outlook and export demand. "All three remain quite positive to fall price prospects. The only real negative factor will be recent losses in the memories of some feedlot operators," he adds.

Heavy feeder cattle could average about $3 per hundredweight (cwt.) above year ago levels in late summer-early fall with the best prices anticipated in late August and early November. Export demand is expected to be an important positive price influence in the heavier weight classes this fall.

As well, calf prices are expected to run about $5 above 1990 levels in the fall run he says. "Cheaper feedgrain prices and lower interest rates compared to a year ago are both expected to support those prices."

Gietz says one factor to watch is a shortage of feeder cattle in the U.S. That shortage is supporting feeder prices south of the border.

July followed its typical pattern, a slow time in the feeder markets he notes. Prices in most Alberta markets were steady to slightly lower than during June. No consistent market trend was established from light marketings of variable quality feeders.

During July slaughter cattle prices traded in a narrow range slightly below June levels. There were no noteworthy swings in either supply or demand factors to tip the market he adds.

One notable though, is low hide values. "They have been a significant negative influence on slaughter cattle prices this year, and much of the decline has been in recent weeks. Hide prices are often closely related to the state of the world economy and demand for leather products," he says.

Contact: Ron Gietz
427-5376

When to sell pasture feeder cattle

Early, fall or late sale are the three choices producers have in selling their pasture feeder cattle, but none of the choices are as easy as they sound says an Alberta Agriculture marketing specialist.

"Timing and selecting your market can mean the difference between a healthy profit or sickening loss," says Doug Walkey, Red Deer based regional specialist. "While the alternatives seem simple, each can have a dramatic effect on an individual cattle operation."

Walkey adds some choices might not even be open to a particular producer. For example, because they lack feed and pen space some producers couldn't hold feeders until the late fall. Lack of pasture or cash flow could force some producers to sell their feeders in late August.

From analysis of this year's conditions the late August sale may be a producer's best bet for the highest return he says. Working it through, a 800 pound feeder at the end of August should sell at about $95 per hundredweight (cwt.), returning a net of $760 per head. A November sale, with about $82.50 per head in additional expenses, would probably see a 900 pound calf sell at $94/cwt. for a net return per head of $764. "Given the extra work and uncertain November pricing, August selling should be given consideration," he says. Both prices are above an estimated net return for about $741 per head for feeders sold during September.

There is a greater risk in selling calves during a non-traditional time notes livestock market analyst Ron Gietz. "For example, in the Edmonton market during the last five years, prices have averaged highest in the first week after Labor Day. But price variation from year-to-year has also been greater in early fall."

Each of the feeder selling alternatives do offer particular advantages says Walkey. "It's up to producers to pick the marketing option that best fits their operation."

The advantages of selling heavy feeders in late August are premium prices and conserved pasture. August, Walkey says, offers the probability for the highest summer and early fall prices. Removing animals from the pasture early leaves more forage cover, allows plants to build reserves before hardening and promotes more winter plant survival. As a result, producers might be able to pasture more animals on the same land in a shorter grazing period.

Selling yearlings during the traditional fall calf run is strewn with disadvantages. Sales usually come during the busy harvest season. This often leads to delays and a 'market when it snows' strategy that causes prices to drop sharply when snows do come. As well, gains on pasture can be limited by pasture conditions in the fall. Sometimes animals can lose weight as forage quality and production dwindle.

Walkey notes seasonal price trends are lowest during the latter part of September and October. Gietz adds statistics from major Alberta livestock markets show a strong relationship between volumes and prices during the fall calf run. "Then marketings are high, prices are low and vice versa, so plan to try to avoid peak marketing periods."

A final alternative for heavy feeders is selling after the fall calf run. "This strategy also comes with challenges," Walkey notes. "Because it's late in the year, the animals must be taken from the pasture and put in a feedlot to maintain their rate of gain.

For more information on comparing marketing alternatives for grass cattle, read the factsheet "Buy-Selling Economics for Feeder Cattle" (Agdex 821-49). It is available from district agriculturists and the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Or, talk to your local district agriculturist, regional livestock specialist or market economist.

Contact: *Doug Walkey* *340-7612* *Ron Gietz* *427-5376*

Rejuvenating flock possible strategy for lamb market upswing

Lamb producers should consider market strategies to take advantage of prices predicted to be significantly better in 1992 says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Now is the time to consider expanding your flock or rejuvenating it by replacing old ewes with younger stock to see you through a three to four year market upswing," says Jo Ann Cmoluch.

Another consideration is looking for lean breeding stock she adds. "A new grading system focused on identifying lean carcasses will be implemented soon, so producers should look for opportunities during this period of low prices to buy breeding stock that will improve the carcass quality of their flock."

Currently though, slaughter lamb prices are declining with the seasonal increases in lamb marketing. The bid range at the Canada West Foods plant in Innisfail was steady at $58 to $61 per hundredweight (cwt.) through July. The range was similar at the Fort Macleod auction. Feeder lamb prices covered a wider range, between $42 and $66/cwt. At the latest Edmonton lamb sales, prices were lower for both slaughter and feeder lambs, in the $45 to $50/cwt. range for both.

Cmoluch says the next few months will see Alberta slaughter lamb prices pressured as marketings increase, but firmer markets in the United States coupled with declines in the value of the Canadian dollar will provide support to the market.

A positive sign for the Alberta lamb market is the export of over 2,200 head of feeder and slaughter lambs through July. "Until recently, exports to the U.S. had been virtually non-existent. Trade south had been fairly steady through previous years and was, at times, considerable," she says.

Contact: *Jo Ann Cmoluch* *427-5387*

Applications for fertilizer program still being accepted

Alberta's Agriculture Minister is reminding farmers they have until January 31, 1992, to submit applications to the Alberta Farm Fertilizer Price Protection Plan.

Fertilizer purchases made up to July 31, 1991, are eligible for payments, says Ernie Isley, providing that applications are submitted before the January 1992 deadline. Purchases must be completely paid for at the time of application.

The Alberta Farm Fertilizer Price Protection Plan was originally introduced in 1985 to help farmers reduce crop production costs. The program ended as scheduled on July 31, 1991. The initiative has allowed farmers to apply for a rebate of $50 per tonne of nitrogen and $25 per tonne of phosphate contained in fertilizer blends.

"Governments are restructuring their agricultural support to make assistance to farmers less trade-distorting," says Isley. "As such, income support programs such as the Gross Revenue Insurance Program (GRIP) and tripartite stabilization programs are replacing input support programs such as the Alberta Farm Fertilizer Price Protection Plan."

The minister adds the fertilizer program has more than fulfilled its mandate by injecting over $136 million into the farming community over a seven-year period. Since the program was introduced, more than 43,000 Alberta farmers have applied.

Farmers are encouraged to submit their applications well in advance of the January 1992 deadline.

Contact: *Brad Klak* *427-2137* *Lloyd Andruchow* *422-5672*

Alberta Agriculture appointments

New district home economist in Thorhild

Kathleen Ozmun is the new Alberta Agriculture district home economist in Thorhild. Ozmun brings a strong background in leadership development, communication skills and education programs to the job. She joins the department from a three year stint with the Canadian Red Cross Society as a youth consultant and five years as a regional 4-H specialist in Saskatchewan. "It must be accessible or else it may not get used" is her organizational rule of thumb, and it will guide her as she starts her new job she says. Ozmun is a 1983 graduate of the University of Saskatchewan's BSc in home economics program. She was born in Delisle, Saskatchewan and was raised on a mixed farm near Pilger, 80 miles north east of Saskatoon. As district home economist she will provide information and educational programs to farm families in the areas of farm financial management, food and nutrition, clothing and textiles and leadership skills. Ozmun can be contacted in Thorhild at 398-3993.

Smoky Lake has new district home economist

The Alberta Agriculture district office in Smoky Lake has a new home economist. Jacqueline Popko joins the department after graduating from the University of Alberta with a BSc in home economics this spring. In her new duties she will be a resource person to the rural community and farm families, providing information and educational programs in a variety of diverse areas including farm financial management, foods and nutrition and consumer problems. District home economists also promote Alberta Made food products, and work with agricultural and rural groups including area 4-H clubs. "I've already encouraged the community to call or come in and visit my office," she says, "and, I'm looking forward to getting acquainted with the people and Smoky Lake area." Popko is originally from Westlock. She can be contacted in Smoky Lake at 656-3613.

Agri-News briefs

Hog prices expected lower for rest of '91

Hog prices have only one direction to go the rest of this year says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "The direction is lower, and the only real questions are how much lower and how quickly," says Ron Gietz. Expansion of the U.S. herd is the main factor in the price squeeze. "Ongoing expansion will continue to pressure slaughter hog prices lower and squeeze margins until a large number of U.S. producers decide to cut back production or leave the industry. Still that will take time," he says. Gietz predicts if the current hog price cycle is considered typical, price lows would come in the fall of 1992. For this year, he estimates prices in Alberta will gradually decrease with annual lows coming in December. He projects the average Alberta producer payment price for Index 100 hogs as $1.50 per kilogram dressed through August and September, dropping to $1.35 by December. This compares to $1.69 last August and $1.40 last December. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at 427-5376.

Quality as important as pea harvest to prices

Quality as much as the size of this year's pea harvest will play a determining factor in prices for the crop year says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Because a large part of seeded acreage is in green peas, a harvest like last year's would make a tremendous volume of food quality green peas available. In combination with a large U.S. crop, price prospects would be relatively poor—$4.25 to $4.75 per bushel," says Al Dooley. The feed market could absorb larger volumes of feed peas, but prices would likely only be in the $3.75 to $4.25 range he says. One positive note for Canadian producers is that they planted fewer pea acres than they said they intended to this spring. For more information about special crop commodity markets, contact Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5387.

Nominations open for 1991 soil conservation awards

The Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) and the Western Producer are once again looking to honor a farm family and a conservation group through their annual soil conservation awards. The Conservation Farm Family Award recognizes outstanding achievement and leadership in soil conservation by Alberta farm families. Nominations for this award close October 1. Nominations will be received by regional soil conservation co-ordinators until that date. Six regional finalists will be selected and all will receive an expense paid trip to the 1992 soil conservation workshop in January. The Group Conservation Award honors outstanding performance by an Alberta group in demonstrating their conservation commitment. Nominations for this award should be made directly to the ACTS office. Nominations close October 15. For more information, contact Russell Evans at Box 1, Site 9, R.R. 5, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2G6, call 936-5306 or FAX 936-5523.

Exchange offers opportunity to work in Japan

The Alberta-Hokkaido Exchange Program offers young Albertans an opportunity to see Japan. Participants can travel, work in an agricultural setting and learn about the culture and lifestyle in Alberta's sister province in Japan. Placements are ongoing. The exchange began 16 years ago. For more information, contact Jim Klys, president of the Alberta-Hokkaido Exchange Program, by writing R.R. 2, Carstairs, Alberta, T0M 0N0, or calling 337-2166.

Strawberries Brooks field day theme August 23

Sensational strawberries are the theme of the 1991 field day at the Alberta Agriculture Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks on August 23. Displays, demonstrations, lectures, tours and a plant pest clinic are all on the day's agenda. Season permitting, fresh corn will also be provided to visitors. Activities begin at 9 a.m. and run through 4 p.m. For more information, call the center at 362-3391.

4-H Club Week hosts out-of-province delegates for first time

At this year's 49th annual 4-H Club Week program Alberta delegates were joined for the first time by 4-H delegates from out of the province. Delegates from the three other western provinces were among the almost 90 participants at the July event held at Olds College. "The presence of the out-of-province delegates added a new dimension to the program," says Arron Madson, provincial 4-H personal development specialist. "It was a chance for Alberta delegates to look at our 4-H program and compare it to other programs in Western Canada." This year's theme was "voyage beneath the surface" and was used to direct participants through a week of learning, fun and personal growth. Among topics discussed were Canada's future, career planning, peer support, family, goal setting and self esteem. Club Week is open to senior 74-H members between the ages of 15 and 21 years. Members can only attend once as a delegate. Program sponsors include the Alberta Wheat Pool, the United Grain Growers, Agriculture Canada and Alberta Agriculture. For more information, contact Arron Madson in Edmonton at 422-4444.

AG.7.641

AGRI-NEWS

August 19, 1991

Rural leaders look to future at Camrose conference

Rural leaders won't just sit back and listen as the future of their communities are discussed at a conference this fall, they'll be active participants at the "Stimulating rural economies for the 2000s" conference.

"Round table discussions will be given equal time with the speakers, and speakers will give questions for their audiences to consider as a focus to their discussions. This makes the conference a learning experience," says Peter Apedaile, a professor of rural economy at University of Alberta and one of the conference organizers. The conference will be held in Camrose October 23 through 25. It's the third in a series of five annual national conferences organized by the Agricultural and Rural Restructuring Group (AARG), a group of national rural social scientists and policy analysts committed to improving both rural issue research and policy.

Apedaile is one of an original group of about dozen academics and policy makers who met in Regina in 1987 and started AARG. He says its goal is to build stronger local institutions in rural communities, so they can reduce their dependency on government and individual resource industries. The end result is that rural communities will become able to "steer their own destiny" he says.

Anyone interested and experienced in rural issues and development would be interested in the conference he says. This includes: municipal leaders; representatives of commodity and rural organizations; Chamber of Commerce and economic development officials; community futures committee members; individuals involved in their own rural initiative programs; academics and researchers; and, civil servants responsible for policy and policy analysis.

The Camrose conference will examine a major characteristic of rural communities in Canada—their dependency on a single major resource industry—overlaid with the effects economic globalization is having on rural communities. For some communities, globalization has meant a halt to business as usual, but its changes don't have to be negative.

Opportunities, such as "platform" manufacturing, also exist he notes.

To discuss these issues will be a number of speakers involved in rural research, planning and policy from across Canada, as well as a special guest from France. "All the 35 plus speakers and session chairs have a first-hand involvement in research, policy and or policy analysis," says Apedaile.

Christine Kovacshazy, an Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Council of Europe consultant, will bring some thought provoking messages to her Canadian audience he says. Kovacshazy's consulting duties are second to her responsibility for rural affairs in the five-year national planning process in France. She also lectures at the Institute for Higher Studies in rural law and economics in Paris.

Apedaile notes France is frequently used as a model for rural development. Kovacshzy's presentation will broaden conference participants' outlooks he says. "She will indicate rural goes way beyond agriculture, and will make quite clear some of the other dimensions."

Reg Kontz, head of Alberta Agriculture's agricultural and community services branch and a conference session chairman, says the conference will be a real learning

Con't on page 2

This Week

Rural leaders look to future at Camrose conference	1
Masters celebrates the horse	2
Paint versus Percheron in "Battle of the Breeds"	2
Olde Tyme Sheep Fair goes national	3
Flavor reward in garden harvest	4
Temperature, humidity key to vegetable storage	4
Briefs	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

experience for participants. "There are lessons for rural Alberta from what has happened in Europe and the United States. Those will be among the important ideas presented at the conference."

Some of the other speakers and session chairs are to include: Shirley McClellan, Alberta's associate agriculture minister; Gordon Miller, president of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties; Bob Splane, Alberta Agriculture Development Corporation (AADC) chairman; Pat Yozuwa, Saskatchewan deputy minister of energy and mines; and, Ralph Jesperson, Alberta farmer and president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Apedaile notes conference registration is limited to 250 people. In addition, 60 spots will be open to Alberta and Saskatchewan university and college students. Organizers have also provided another 40 spots for the Camrose area general public. "These additional spots are outreach and education in the area," Apedaile says. Registration fees before September 20 are $170, and after that date $250.

For registration and other information, contact the Camrose Regional Exhibition Association at 672-3640.

Contact: Peter Apedaile 492-4580 Reg Kontz 427-2171

Masters celebrates the horse

Everything equine will be on display from September 4 through 8 at Spruce Meadows during the Masters and its associated events.

"From an Alberta industry perspective, the Alberta Breeds for the World showcase has become a very important part of the Masters," says Bob Coleman, of Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch.

Presented since 1984, the Alberta Breeds for the World program will include 19 feature breeds in 1991. An addition this year is the Canadian, a versatile Quebec-based breed, popular as a driving horse.

Breed associations provide booths and exhibits, including horses. Association representatives are on-hand to talk to visitors and also offer special demonstrations.

Among the planned demonstrations will be a packing clinic with Fjords, a roping demonstration and clinic by the Pinto association, an ownership clinic with the Standardbreds and a youth day with the Morgans. "A number of demonstrations will be done daily. Visitors can watch and also talk about particular breeds with representatives at the various booths," he says.

Also of special note are: the American Saddlebred Association celebrating its 100th anniversary at its booth; the North American annual general meeting of the Connemera (type of pony) association; and, world champion costume winner John Webber at the Appaloosa booth.

Returning after a very successful debut in 1990, is the Battle of the Breeds. Held in conjunction with Alberta Breeds for the World, breed teams compete in eight events to the earn the title of world champion versatile horse. Team Pinto will defend its 1990 title against 14 other breeds ranging from ponies to heavy horses.

The feature event of the Masters is the world class jumping tournament. Teams and individuals from 13 countries will compete for over $1.2 million in prize money.

"We're very fortunate to have this world class event in this province, providing an opportunity for Albertans to see the very best of international show jumping," says Coleman.

Equi-Fair is another of the major events during the Masters. Over 200 international exhibitors in the equine trade fair will display the latest in clothing, art, equipment and innovations related to the horse and horse enthusiast.

This year's veterinary seminar features guest speaker Ab Barneveld from the Netherlands. The professor of large animal surgery and department head of the large animal orthopedic section at the State University Veterinary College at Ultrecht, will discuss equine orthopedic disorders. For more information about the two day seminar, contact Monica Comm at Spruce Meadows at 254-3200.

Rounding out the Masters activities is the "Festival of Nations". It offers a variety of international foods, gifts and music to Spruce Meadows visitors.

Spruce Meadows is located one kilometre south of Calgary city limits on Highway 2 and two kilometres west on Highway 22X.

For more information about Alberta Breeds for the World, contact the horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650 or in Edmonton at 427-6361. For information about the Masters, contact Spruce Meadows at 254-3200.

Contact: Bob Coleman 427-6361
Doug Milligan 297-6650
Les Burwash 297-6650

Paint verus Percheron in "Battle of the Breeds"

Next month Team Paint will defend the world championship most versatile horse title it earned last year at the first annual "Battle of the Breeds" during the Spruce Meadows Masters.

A special feature of the Alberta Breeds for the World component of Spruce Meadows' annual celebration of the horse, the Battle of the Breeds is returning for its second year. The Masters runs from September 4 through 8. The battle itself is a series of eight events testing the athletic ability, temperament and versatility of each breed.

"Although each breed has some events in which they excel, no one breed has an overall advantage, so the fan favorite Percheron team will again be cheered as its challenges the course along with 14 other breed teams," says Doug Milligan,

Con't on page 3

head of Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch. "This diversity of breeds makes the events very exciting for the competitors and the crowd alike as the battle is waged to crown the most versatile breed."

This year 15 different breeds have entered teams. New competitors for 1991 are another heavy horse team, the Belgians, and Team Fjord. Each team consists of four horses and riders and each horse and rider must enter at least one event. Each team must enter at least six of eight events. The eight events are compulsory skills, trail, jumping, barrel racing, obstacle driving, champagne ride, team relay and freestyle.

"Last year the teams developed a great deal of team spirit," he notes, "and, most entered every event."

One or two of the events are held throughout each day of the Masters. Team points are tabulated and posted. On the final day, Sunday, the champagne ride concludes the events and the "world championship" breed is crowned.

In the finale champagne ride, riders must hold a glass of wine and follow a City of Calgary Mounted Police patrol on a brisk tour of the Spruce Meadows International jump course. Placings are based on who has the most wine at the end of the course says Milligan.

"In particular, the champagne ride demonstrates the smooth elegant gaits of the some of specialized breeds including the Tennesee Walker, Peruvian Paso and American Saddlebred." Milligan says.

Events are designed and selected to be interesting for spectators and fair to the wide variety of breeds involved in the competition. "The compulsory skills—maneuvers as simple as walking—show athletic ability and training. So do the obstacles in the trail ride, which also show off the horse's temperament," he says.

Particularly exciting for the spectators are the speed and control of four barrel race, the controlled gaits of the team relay and the costumes and music in the freestyle event "Because these events are unique, all are a lot of fun for the riders as well as the crowd," he adds.

Sponsors AGT and ATCOR offer $30,000 in prize money for the competition.

The Battle of the Breeds is a very visible part of Alberta Breeds for the World, a showcase of Alberta horses and horse breeders. Each breed in the competition, as well as other breeds, will be represented at display booths in the Riding Hall. Visitors can learn more from breed association representatives as well as watch other specialized demonstrations says Milligan.

Spruce Meadows is located one kilometre south of Calgary city limits on Highway 2 and two kilometres west of Highway 22X.

For more information about Battle of the Breeds and other activities at the Masters, contact the horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650, in Edmonton at 427-6361, or Spruce Meadows at 254-3200

Contact: *Doug Milligan* *297-6650* *Bob Coleman* *427-6361*

Olde Tyme Sheep Fair goes national

Alberta's Olde Tyme Sheep Fair will celebrate its sixth anniversary September 21 by adding a national competition to its wide variety of events.

The first National Lamb Carcass Competition will be hosted at the multi-event one-day fair says Kim Stanford, Alberta Agriculture sheep specialist. The competition is sponsored by the Canadian Sheep Federation and supported by Agriculture Canada, and offers a $1,000 first prize.

Canada's new national lamb classification system makes the national competition possible says Will Verboven, manager of the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission.

Competition carcasses will be judged in the originating region by federal graders trained in the new classification system and the results will be faxed to the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Lacombe. The top two carcasses from each region will be air-freighted to Olds in time for display and auction on September 21.

There's also still time to enter the competition, as entries close on August 30. Alberta producers can contact Mike Rieberger in Bowden at 224-3743 for entry forms. Further information is also available from Stanford in Airdrie, provincial sheep organizations and the Canadian Sheep Federation office in Nepean at (613)825-3866.

The Olde Tyme Sheep Fair includes a family sheep and wool fair and commercial ewe sale. Among the fair's events are a wool content bench show, a sheep related photography contest, handicraft booths, lamb barbeque, industry displays, sheering demonstration, dog trials, junior, intermediate and master shepherd competitions, sheep show, sheep-to-shawl team event and fleece competition.

The fair opens at the Olds Agricultural Grounds at 9 a.m. and runs through 9 p.m. that evening.

Contact: *Kim Stanford* *948-8517*
Mike or Linda Rieberger 224-3743
Will Verboven *295-1988*

Flavor reward in garden harvest

Enjoying your own vegetables is easy when they can be harvested at their peak, but the uncertainties of Alberta weather can make harvesting tricky says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Every gardener anticipates savoring the flavor of fresh vegetables from their garden, but knowing when vegetables are ready and how to ripen vegetables if they've been picked early to avoid a frost are important to sitting down, eating and enjoying your vegetable harvest," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre.

North says some of the most common questions asked of the centre's staff are about corn, tomatoes, onions, squash and pumpkins.

Dry, brown corn silk is one indication corn is ready to eat. Cobs should be checked to see if they are full, with kernels to their tips. Kernels should be at the milk stage.

"You can check this by piercing a kernel with your fingernail. If a white milky liquid squirts out, then the corn is ripe. If the liquid is clear, then the corn is still immature," she says. "If it's lumpy, then it's overmature. While still edible, it's not as sweet."

Corn not used immediately after picking should be cooled. Cooling preserves sweetness as the natural sugars begin to be converted to starch as soon as the corn is harvested. North suggests either refrigeration or soaking in ice water.

Vine ripened tomatoes are another juicy and sweet treat from the garden. Gardeners can promote vine ripening by pruning new flowers and topping staking varieties after the first week of August. This allows the plant to put more energy into ripening the existing fruit.

Although vine-ripened tomatoes are a goal, sometimes late summer and early fall weather doesn't co-operate and tomatoes are harvested while still green. Tomatoes will ripen indoors, but North recommends keeping the tomatoes in a sunny windowsill rather than wrapping them in paper and storing them.

"Sun ripened tomatoes will have 50 per cent more vitamin C than those ripened in the dark," she says.

Pruning vines to prevent flowering will also encourage winter squash and pumpkins to ripen. Squash are mature when a thumbnail can't break the skin of the vegetable.

Onions are ready to harvest when the tops fall over naturally. "Breaking over the tops isn't recommended because the onions won't mature properly or store as well," says North.

To promote onion maturation, withhold water after August 15. Also, lift onions slightly with a garden fork to break feeder roots.

After harvesting, onions need to be cured at a warm temperature (26 to 30°C) for a week to 10 days. Tops will dry and skins will get papery allowing for better storage. Onions should be stored at zero to three degrees Celsius.

For more information about harvesting, ripening or storing vegetables, contact the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton or the Alberta

Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

Temperature, humidity key to vegetable storage

When your garden provides a bountiful harvest, the next question becomes how to best use the vegetables you've grown says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"When it comes to storage, vegetables can be stored for extended periods if adequate temperature, humidity and airflow are maintained," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center.

But, before starting to store vegetables in a root cellar or cold room, the home gardener should check out the limits of their storage area she says. "To avoid disappointment, you need to consider the limitations of your storage area before deciding what goes into it. If it's fairly well insulated, has adequate air exchange and tends to remain cool and moist, it's suitable for storing potatoes and other root vegetables.

"If the area is warmer and drier, or poorly insulated, it might be used for squash and pumpkins. If your storage facility has poor ventilation or widely fluctuating temperatures, it shouldn't be used for vegetables that require high levels of humidity."

Vegetables that should be stored in cold (zero to one degree Celsius) and humid (95 to 100 per cent) conditions include beets, cabbage, carrots, parsnips, radishes and rutabagas. In these conditions, dependent on type, these vegetables will keep well for between two and six months.

Potatoes should also be stored in high humidity, between 90 and 95 per cent, but in cool rather than cold temperatures—between five and seven degrees Celsius for table potatoes. Seed potatoes should be kept slightly cooler. Both types will keep for between five and 10 months.

Squash, marrows and pumpkins require cool and dry storage conditions at 10 to 12°C and between 70 and 75 per cent humidity. They can be kept for up to six months.

Heat cured onions should be kept at a cooler temperature—between zero and three degrees Celsius—and at a dry 70 to 75 per cent humidity.

Barkley says some compromises might be needed if there is a limited storage area for a number of different vegetables. She notes however that vegetables requiring high humidity, such as carrots and potatoes, will rapidly lose crispness and become unpalatable if they are stored in too dry an area. On the flip side, vegetables that require low humidity can be kept

Con't on page 5

in a high humidity areas, but they will eventually rot or mould.

"Temperatures can vary from the recommendations. At higher temperatures, longevity and quality are reduced, but the variation can allow for storage compromises," she says.

For example, potatoes stored at below four degrees Celsius develop an unpleasant sweet taste. However, they lose this taste if they are allowed to warm-up for a few days before they are used. So, potatoes can be successful stored with cabbage, carrots and beets at a lower temperature.

Contact: Shelley Barkley 362-3391

Agri-News briefs

1991 4-H PDP program popular

Nearly 90 13 and 14 year old 4-Hers from across Alberta participated in the fourth annual "People developing people" (PDP) program. "Interest shown in attending this year's PDP program was so great that a waiting list had to be made," says Arron Madson, Alberta Agriculture 4-H personal development specialist. The program's theme was "a piece of the puzzle". Using it, delegates learned about how they fit into their environment. Over the six days in late July, delegates took part in a combination of recreation and personal development sessions. The former included an overnight camp out and the latter, self concept, leisure and decision making. This unique program is held at the Battle Lake 4-H Centre. Among its sponsors are Alberta Agriculture, Husky Oil, United Grain Growers, Alberta Wheat Pool and Agriculture Canada. For more information, contact Madson in Edmonton at 427-2541.

Wild rice growers annual meeting August 24

The Alberta Wild Rice Association is holding its annual meeting and harvest field day demonstration on August 24 at the Parkview Hall near Athabasca. The annual meeting begins at 10 a.m. A harvest demonstration at Jackfish Lake will follow lunch. Colleen Pierce, Alberta Agriculture district home economist in Lac La Biche, will be at the field day with recipes and information about cooking wild rice. To assist in planning activities, interested persons are asked to contact the Lac La Biche district Alberta Agriculture office at 632-5218 before August 21. For more information call Harvey Yoder at the same number.

AGRI-NEWS

August 26, 1991

Alberta joins NISA

Alberta farmers will now be able to join the Net Income Stabalization Account (NISA) program.

Alberta's two agriculture ministers, Ernie Isley and Shirley McClellan, announced August 15 that the provincial government cabinet and caucus had endorsed the NISA plan.

NISA is administered by the federal government and is jointly funded by producers and the federal and provincial governments. NISA allows individual producers to put money away in good years for withdrawal when net income is low in other years. The program was developed by the Grains and Oilseeds Task Force as part of the federal agricultural policy review known as "Growing Together".

"Alberta's entry builds on our government's continuing commitment to the agricultural industry in Alberta and adds a complementary program to the GRIP component of our safety net system, which is already in place," says Isley.

"It is a program that will meet international trading rules and encourage a market responsive, self-reliant agriculture, all of which are pillars of the Growing Together process," says McClellan.

Both ministers note that the timing of Alberta's entry is appropriate. Initial prices offered by the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) for the 1991-92 crop year are signalling a further reduction in grain farm income, despite a harvest expected to be larger than average. Cash flow problems are severe, and the additional assistance provided by the waiving of the usual withdrawal conditions will be welcomed by many producers hit by low prices and unusual weather conditions over the last few years.

Normally, withdrawals from the fund would be triggered either when net income from all sources (on and off-farm) falls below $10,000, or when the farm's current year gross margin is less than the average gross margin for the previous five years.

Payment triggers have been waived for this year only, and producers will not be required to actually make their basic contribution in order to receive a payout. It's expected that an Alberta farmer with $100,000 in eligible net sales will qualify for almost $3,500 in NISA payments before the end of this calendar year.

In subsequent years, farmers will be able to contribute a basic two per cent of eligible net sales to an individualized account, which will be matched by federal and provincial contributions of one per cent each. Farmers will also be able to contribute up to an additional 20 per cent of eligible net sales, which will not be matched by governments. Normal withdrawal rules will apply after this first year.

If all Alberta producers participated in the program, 1991 net realized farm income would increase from an expected $423 million to $497 million, still well below the five year average of $598 million, but very close to the 10 year average of $513 million.

NISA will be available to producers of grains and oilseed crops, edible horticulture and special crops except where those commodities are under tripartite stabilization agreements. The federal government has agreed to pay all of the province's share of program costs for the first year (the 1990 taxation year) and one half of the province's share the next year (the 1991 taxation year). It will also contribute an

Cont on page 2

This Week

Alberta joins NISA	1
Ag ambassador school fair expands	2
Children receive 'key' recognition in farm safety campaign	2
New dairy production home study course available	3
Moderation, variety keys to healthy eating	3
Protein necessary part of good diet	4
Complex carbohydrates pack energy punch	4
Alberta Agriculture appointments	5
Briefs	6

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

additional 1.5 per cent of eligible net sales in the first year and 1.0 per cent in the second year.

Contact: Doug Radke
Assistant deputy minister 427-1957
Brad Klak
Executive assistant to the minster 427-2137

Ag ambassador school fair expands

First year success has organizers expanding the activities of the second annual agricultural ambassador school fair in Medicine Hat this fall.

"Everyone involved wants the fair to grow, and wants to build on the incredibly positive relationships that got started last year," says Betty Gabert, Alberta Agriculture's Ag in the Classroom co-ordinator and one of the fair's organizers. The fair and other activities will run November 22 and 23.

Last year's inaugural fair launched the agricultural ambassador program, whose goal is to eventually designate a teacher agricultural ambassador in every Alberta school. The program is an outgrowth of the Summer Agricultural Institute, an intensive 12-day, full credit, fourth year university level course for teachers.

"The fair supports the ground swell of community interest in the agricultural ambassador program," says Gabert. "It's a very important program for the agriculture industry as well as the school children it reaches. The awareness created is beneficial for both sides."

The main expansion for this year's fair is the inclusion of a conference for teacher agricultural ambassadors who have already got involved in the program. The conference will start on the evening of November 22 and run through the morning of November 23. Spaces are available for 100 teachers who will be hosted entirely by the agricultural industry.

Gabert says some of the conference spots will be taken by Institute graduates, some of the first agricultural ambassadors. As well, ambassador recruitment has taken place across southern Alberta in the last year and is starting in Calgary in September. "We expect to be swamped with interest, so will accept the first 100 applications," she says.

The keynote speaker at the conference is Ronna Jevne, a renowned University of Alberta professor who will speak on a number of topics including networking. "Her presentation will help the ambassadors with skills they need for networking and maximizing the sharing opportunities offered through the program," Gabert says.

The school fair will be the afternoon of November 23 displaying student entries received from across the province. The fair's competition categories encompass all grades from one through 12 and involve topics and projects related to agriculture in social studies, science and language arts.

Gabert says organizers are expecting many more entries than for the first annual fair with interest stimulated by more local participation as well as participation encouraged by sponsors. "Last year there was very little local participation, but this year there is an agricultural ambassador in every Medicine Hat school, so we expect there will be more participation from the local schools," she says.

As well, many of the 28 confirmed fair sponsors are talking about the fair in their communities. Gabert points to the examples of the Camrose and Grande Prairie agricultural societies who plan to take the message about the fair into their area schools, particularly to high schools. "In the senior division there's over $1,000 in prize money available, so participation could be very rewarding," she adds.

Contact: Betty Gabert
427-2402

Children receive 'Key' recognition in farm safety campaign

Rural school children's keen participation in the 'Your Key to Unlocking a Safe 1991' campaign this spring pays off today says Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program manager.

"These children will visit their local John Deere dealership to receive the prizes won from our successful farm safety campaign held in March," says Solomon Kyeremanteng.

Local managers at dealerships across the province, along with a representative from Alberta Agriculture, will make presentations to contest winners today (Monday, August 26) says Kyeremanteng. Children will be receiving prizes ranging from John Deere radio control tractors and front end loaders, to farm safety logo knapsacks. There are 110 prizes to be awarded.

"John Deere Limited has been involved since the beginning of the campaign," says Kyeremanteng, "however, we really wanted to localize the presentations and involve the dealers. I think they are as excited about the campaign as the children."

In March, John Deere Limited and Alberta Agriculture, along with local members of the Alberta Women's Institutes (AWI) asked 10,000 children from grades one to six to seek out the best location on their farm to remind machinery operators to 'turn it off'.

After placing a key shaped sticker on machinery, children sent a questionnaire back to Alberta Agriculture, describing where the sticker was placed. More than 2,500 responses were received.

"A vast majority of the children did place it on a tractor," says Kyeremanteng. Other popular place for the sticker were combines, swathers, augers and riding tractor lawn mowers.

Con't on page 3

"We're very hopeful this approach—reaching parents through their children—will have a significant safety dividend. We're also certain the safety message has been reinforced in the children," he says.

Farm machinery is the most common agent involved in fatalities and injuries on the farm. "This campaign focused on a very common sense idea, shut down equipment before you make a repair," says Kyeremanteng.

The safety campaign targeted equipment shut down. Thirty-two per cent of all farm injury accidents in the last 13 years have occurred during repair and maintenance work. (Editor's note: a list of dealership locations where presentations will be made follows.)

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng 427-2186
Jack Gilliland, John Deere (416) 945-7302

John Deere Dealerships

Athabasca – Deer Farm Power Ltd.
Brooks – Evergreen Implements
Calgary – Agro Equipment Ltd.
Camrose – Crawford & Co. Ltd.
Coronation – Stettler Farm Equip. Ltd.
Edmonton – Martin Farm Equip. Ltd.
Foremost – Calhoun Sales & Service Ltd.
Fort Saskatchewan – Deerland Farm Equipment
Grimshaw – Reyda Farm Equip. Ltd.
Hanna – Hanna Farm Equip.
Killam – Grainline Implements Ltd.
Lethbridge – McKay Bros. Farm Implements
Mayerthorpe – Greenland Equipment Ltd.
Medicine Hat – Southland Equipment Ltd.
Olds – Greenline Equipment Sales
Pincher Creek – Ranchers' Supply Ltd.
Ponoka – Westdeer Implements Ltd.
Provost – Wilmar Implement Co. Ltd.
Red Deer – Deermart Equipment Sales
Stettler – Stettler Farm Equipment
St. Paul – Letourneau Farm Supplies Ltd.
Taber – Green Power Ltd.
Trochu – Guard's Implements Ltd.
Wainwright – Benning-Porter Equip. Ltd.
Westlock – A. Miller Farm Equip. Ltd.
Wetaskiwin – Normart Equipment Ltd.
Vermilion – Agland
Vulcan – Deer-Country Equipment Ltd.

New dairy production home study course available

Sound management practices are the emphasis in the new second edition of Alberta Agriculture's dairy production home study course.

"The 10 chapter course provides comprehensive information on all aspects of dairy production," says Faye Douglas-Phillips, co-ordinator of the home study program.

Some of the key topics include: marketing; using the Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) program to make profitable management decisions; developing a feeding program; budgeting; and, financial decision making. Production topics include developing a breeding program, optimizing dairy housing and equipment, and maintaining quality milk production.

"While beginning milk producers would find this course most useful, established producers would also find it beneficial, particularly for training farm labor," she says. "And, like all Alberta Agriculture home study courses, the dairy production course is designed so it can be worked through at your own pace."

Douglas-Phillips notes dairy production course participants may also be interested in home study's cattle nutrition course. "Since some of the most significant gains in dairy productivity and efficiency are made through feeding practices, the cattle nutrition course, which deals with nutrition and feeding management in more detail, might interest dairy producers."

The dairy production course is now available for $35, plus GST. Additional handling charges apply if the order is from outside Alberta. To order, send a cheque made payable to the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) at 14815 - 119 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 2N9.

Application forms with more information are also available from Alberta Agriculture district offices, or the home study program in Edmonton by calling 427-2404.

Contact: Faye Douglas-Phillips
427-2404

Moderation, variety keys to healthy eating

The two key words in healthy eating and sound nutrition are moderation and variety says Alberta Agriculture's provincial food and nutrition specialist.

"Both of these principles are embodied in Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating released earlier this year by Health and Welfare Canada," says Aileen Whitmore of the home economics branch in Edmonton. "These updated recommendations should help Canadians sort out the concerns that they've expressed about healthy eating, as what

Con t on page 4

we eat seems to be one of the main public health concerns of today."

The first of the guidelines encourages eating a variety of foods. In that variety, people should emphasize cereals, breads, other grain products, vegetables and fruits. "These foods are primarily a source of complex carbohydrates, a low calorie energy source. Plus many of these foods provide other essential nutrients as well as fibre," says Whitmore.

Choosing low-fat dairy products, leaner meats and food prepared with little or no fat are also recommended as ways to cut down our fat intake. "This doesn't mean avoiding particular foods, it means making better choices when buying foods and in how you prepare them. A lot of needless calories and fat come from extras in frying foods, or a thick layer of mayonnaise on a sandwich," she says.

The guidelines also recommend limiting salt, alcohol and caffeine intake. As well, it advises to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight by enjoying regular physical activity, along with healthy eating.

"The recommendations are about lifestyle," says Whitmore, "and, the role nutrition plays in our health and life. Because many trusted and prestigious institutions such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society have said there is a relationship between diet and several chronic diseases, people are paying more attention to what they eat."

One of the most important things concerned people should do is to follow the recommended guidelines of moderation, variety and balance she adds. "People have over-reacted to headline-making studies by avoiding foods, or placing faith in a certain food as a magic cure or prevention. A single food or class of foods can't and shouldn't be expected to have a visible impact on chronic degenerative diseases. Foods become important only when considered in the content of a total diet, and then over an extended period of time.

"Current scientific understanding about the cause and effect relationship between diet and a specific disease is often incomplete and frequently controversial. While growing scientific information suggests relationships, science still has some way to go to prove conclusive relationships. For now, following the new recommendations give people a solid nutritional base for a healthy diet."

Contact: Aileen Whitmore
427-2412

Protein necessary part of good diet

Like all other nutrients protein isn't magic, but it is an important part of a balanced healthy diet says an Alberta Agriculture food and nutrition specialist.

"People have carried around the idea that lots of protein builds lots of muscle. While muscles are made of protein, there is no direct link between big muscles and "big" amounts of protein. More recently, people have avoided meat protein because of cholesterol and fat contents. But, both overeating and not eating protein aren't good strategies," says Suzanne Tenold, the Airdrie based regional specialist.

Home economists and dieticians encourage people to follow Health and Welfare Canada's guidelines to healthy eating that recommend moderation and balance she says. "Selecting foods in moderation, rather than avoiding foods such as meat, is the key principle. In the area of protein, the latest guidelines say to choose lower-fat dairy products, leaner meats and foods prepared with little or no fat."

Without protein, life wouldn't exist. It's the vehicle that carries nutrients to all parts of the body and it makes body tissues during growth and reproduction. Protein creates new cells when old ones die, it helps to clot blood, and it makes scar tissue. As well, protein helps us to see. Even the antibodies that protect us from disease are made of protein.

The body requires a few ounces of protein daily to carry out these functions. Health and Welfare Canada recommends two servings of meat, fish, poultry or alternate protein sources daily she notes. "One serving is 60 to 90 g, or about the size of a deck of playing cards."

Protein can come from a wide variety of sources including meat, eggs, dairy products, pulses and grains.

Meat has been described as high quality protein she notes, as it supplies all of the essential amino acids our bodies need and can't produce. It also contains other essential nutrients such as iron, B-vitamins and zinc.

Protein from all sources is digested into more than 20 amino acids. From digestion these amino acid building blocks travel through the blood stream to where protein is needed most.

Contact: Suzanne Tenold
948-8504

Complex carbohydrates pack energy punch

One of the first things people should know about nutrition and diet is that over half their calories should come from foods high in carbohydrates says an Alberta Agriculture foods and nutrition specialist.

Health and Welfare Canada suggests 50 to 60 per cent of a day's calories come from foods high in complex carbohydrates. "Health and Welfare's latest healthy eating guidelines also say Canadians should emphasize cereals, breads, other grain products, vegetables and fruits in their diets. This complex carbohydrate family is a key part of a healthy diet," says Airdrie-based Suzanne Tenold.

Most people know carbohydrates as simple sweets and sugars, but more important are the complex carbohydrates

Con't on page 5

that aren't loaded with fats along with the sugar. Complex carbohydrates are found in all plants.

"The more complex types, or starches, are better choices and have more nutritional value. They provide the energy our bodies need at a low calorie cost," she says. "These complex carbohydrates include vegetables, fruits, whole grains and cereals."

Rice and pastas are also high in complex carbohydrates and low in fat. "Grocery store shelves offer a wide variety of pasta choices including traditional favorites of macaroni, spaghetti and noodles. More stores are also offering fresh and frozen pastas. Many of these pastas are also Alberta Made products," she notes.

Dried peas, beans and lentils are also highly nutritious carbohydrate choices. They offer the extra benefit of good protein content she adds

Complex carbohydrates are also important in the diet because they are an essential source of all types of fibre. Dietary fibre from whole grains and cereals, vegetables and fruits is important in digestion and normal body processes.

"Canadians tend to have lower fibre diets than they could have, simply because they overlook complex carbohydrates," says Tenold.

Contact: Suzanne Tenold
948-8504

Alberta Agriculture appointments

Peace regional director transferred to northwest region

John Knapp is moving south from the Peace to become the new director of Alberta Agriculture's northwest region. "John brings 14 years of solid experience to his new position, including four years as a district agriculturist, six years as a specialist and four years as the regional director in Fairview. His varied experience and strong interpersonal skills will suit him well to the challenges and responsibilities of his new position at Barrhead," says Irene Leavitt, Alberta Agriculture's assistant deputy minister of field services. "I'm keenly looking forward to working with the staff, farm families, agribusiness, municipalities and rural organizations in the northwest region," says Knapp. He is married with four children. Knapp takes over his new duties today (August 26), and can be contacted in Barrhead at 674-8264.

New development officer in agri-food and processing development branch

Kirby Bashnick has joined Alberta Agriculture's marketing services division as a development officer in the agri-food and processing development branch. Bashnick, whose new duties include an emphasis on red meat promotion and development, brings six years of experience in the red meats industry to the position. He joined Canada Packers in Calgary shortly after his graduation from the University of Saskatchewan in 1985 where he majored in marketing and finance while obtaining his bachelor of commerce degree. "My past experience will be a definite asset as I deal with the red meat sector, and I look forward to meeting and working with Alberta's food processors," he says. Among his new duties will be assisting Alberta food processors with various information and financial services, as well as incoming and outgoing trade missions. Bashnick can be contacted in Edmonton at 427-7325.

Agri-News briefs

Rats found in Edmonton warehouse

Interprovincial trucking is the suspected culprit in the recent rat infestation of an Edmonton warehouse. Alberta Agriculture officials and Edmonton bylaw enforcement officers confirmed the Norway rat infestation in mid-August. Together they used a plan developed earlier this year to deal with rat infestations in urban areas to deal with the rats. The plan includes eradication along with a door-to-door campaign in the neighbourhood. Mike Dolinski, head of Alberta Agriculture's rat control section, says the program relies on public reports of rat sightings to maintain the province's rat-free status. Rat infestations are expected, given the volume of interprovincial trucking, he adds, "But with our continued border patrols along with public education and co-operation, Alberta will continue to maintain its rat-free status." For more information, contact Dolinski in Edmonton at 427-7098.

Regulatory review underway for enviornmental protection act

Alberta Environment is encouraging interested people to participate in the development of new regulations related to updated environmental legislation. Along with drafting and passing a new environmental protection and enhancement act, new environmental regulations also need to be developed. Currently there are 39 regulations, some dating back almost 20 years. These regulations are scheduled for submission to the provincial government cabinet in 1992. Alberta Environment minister Ralph Klein has called on Albertans for their views and suggestions through participation at information meetings and written submissions. For more information about the regulatory review process, call Alberta Environment toll-free at 1-800-661-5586.

Water management legislation under reivew

Part of the Alberta government's review of provincial environmental legislation is looking at water management policies and practices. The complex Water Resources Act is being reviewed separately from other environmental legislation. Anyone interested in more information on the public review of water management policies and legislation, should call 1-800-661-5586.

Memorial award to honor young conservation farmers

A new soil conservation planning award will recognize an Alberta farmer under the age of 25 who develops a comprehensive three to five year conservation plan. The A.W. Arrison Award for soil conservation planning honors the memory of the Bassano area farmer who consistently adopted new tillage practices. Farmers who either operate their own farm, or who are actively involved in a family farm where they participate in the management process, are eligible for the award. Award entries require detailed action plans with present practices and problems as well as specific changes to correct the problems. The plan should also include field maps, maps of future changes and a discussion of crop rotations, goals, machinery requirements, water management, wildlife management and the role of livestock and forages. The entry deadline is November 30. The award is presented by Arrison Farms Ltd. For more information, contact the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) at Box 1, Site 9, R.R. 5, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2G6 or call 936-5306, or contact Wayne Arrison at 347-5392.

AL 1.69

AGRI-NEWS

September 2, 1991

Purple loosestrife alert

Alberta Agriculture and Ducks Unlimited are asking anyone who sees purple loosestrife around a wetland in the province to give them a call.

The attractive purple spiked plant has been labelled a "beautiful killer" by the Canadian Wildlife Federation, as it will completely take over a wetland eliminating all habitat and wildlife from muskrat and beavers, to ducks and songbirds.

"Our goal is to prevent purple loosestrife from becoming a problem here in Alberta," says Shaffeek Ali of Alberta Agriculture's crop protection branch. Alberta Agriculture and Ducks Unlimited are working to together on both awareness and control.

If the partnership is successful, he says, purple loosestrife won't become a major problem in Alberta wetlands. It is a problem in southern Ontario, Manitoba and parts of the United States, where it has been banned. "By preventing it from spreading any further and eliminating what has been found, we'd like to be purple loosestrife free."

Anyone who comes across purple loosestrife in a wetlands area should call the crop protection branch in Edmonton at 427-7098 (toll-free through the nearest Alberta Government RITE centre).

Ali notes the concern is with "wild" purple loosestrife, not the perennial known as lythrum, commonly used as an ornamental garden plant. "These ornamental cultivars generally don't produce viable seeds, and they're not a threat to spread to wetlands."

He advises buying lythrum from a nursery that propagates its own plants, and avoid seed produced plants. "If your first-year plants look wild, tall and vigorous, take them back to the nursery or destroy them."

To date, only eight purple loosestrife sites have been identified in the province. Sites are scattered around the province, and include the city of Edmonton as well as near Medicine Hat, Sherwood Park and Leduc.

Those eight infestations are far from severe he notes, varying in size from a few individual plants to a few hundred.

"Because they are small areas, we're hand pulling the loosestrife and using chemical control where feasible and practical."

Purple loosestrife is most likely found in a wetland area including sloughs, dugouts and lakes. "Duck habitat is the most typical place to find it, and unfortunately ducks may well have been how the loosestrife came to be in Alberta from seeds they brought here from other areas," Ali says.

The loosestrife is a highly competitive plant that germinates quickly once seeds touch the ground. Its prolific seed production is one reason it can colonize an area and thrive. Some authorities estimate one plant can produce 100,000 seeds annually.

"As the top competitor, purple loosestrife will just take over a wetland area choking the water system. Its power is increased because no animals eat the plant, and they effectively eat themselves out of their homes. Birds, fish and other animals eat around the loosestrife, eating what's left of the native plants and letting the loosestrife take over," he says.

Purple loosestrife, or lythrum salicaria, isn't native to North America. It was introduced from Europe in the 1800s.

Contact: Shaffeek Ali
427-7098

This Week

Purple loosestrife alert	1
Farm families may have dental plan options	2
Hort congress "grows for tomorrow"	2
Funding announcement enhances farm management skills program	3
Autumn pine needle shed normal	3
Briefs	4
Coming agricultural events	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Farm families may have dental plan options

One of the disadvantages to being self employed is the lack of benefits large companies or government can offer, but dental plans may be available to some Alberta farm families.

Recently Judy Shipley Smith, regional family resource management specialist in Airdrie, did a scan of available plans. She found two farm organizations who offered dental plans, as well as another option through insurance brokers.

"This isn't a complete overview of what may be out there," she emphasizes, "But the options I found in a quick look, do give Alberta farm families an idea about some alternatives. I encourage a family to contact a commodity group or other organization they may belong to, and ask about any dental or health plans that are available."

Interest in dental plans usually comes when a farm family is faced with specialized and costly dental work such as orthodontistry she notes. One way a dental plan can help is by spreading payments over a longer term, rather than having to pay all the costs upfront.

"This option is offered through the Women of Unifarm's dental plan," she says. Through the Alberta Dental Service Corporation's "Quik Card" program, regular payments are scheduled over an extended period of time to cover dental or orthodontic work. Costs vary with family situations. Inquiries about the program can be made through a toll-free number, 1-800-232-1997.

A dental plus plan, underwritten by Blue Cross, can be purchased by United Grain Growers (UGG) members. This plan covers 80 per cent of basic dental and 50 per cent of major orthodontic dental work. Benefits are subject to an annual maximum. The plus component also includes health care benefits such as ambulance, semi-private and private hospital rooms, prescription drugs and accidental death. Annual premiums range around $1,000 for a family. Inquiries about the plan, can also be made to a toll-free number, 1-800-661-6995.

"There's also another alternative, contacting a local insurance broker and organizing a group of small businesses, including farms, together for group dental insurance. I know of one case in central Alberta where an insurance agent set up a plan for a group and its members and employees got a reasonable cost dental plan," she says.

This kind of group dental plan could be also pursued through an agricultural society, commodity group or community association she adds.

Shipley Smith also has advice for a farm family considering a dental plan. "You have to research the benefit before you buy it. You need to know current costs and advantages. The size of your family, your dental health and history will all have a bearing on whether or not a dental plan is a good investment."

Contact: Judy Shipley Smith
948-8505

Hort congress "grows for tomorrow"

Alberta's horticulture industry will grow for tomorrow at its annual congress and trade show in Red Deer October 31 through November 2.

"Commercial vegetable, flower and fruit growers will update themselves and discuss the future of their industry through the congress technical sessions, tours, trade show and association meetings," says Simone Demers Collins, the Alberta Horticultural Congress and Trade Show co-ordinator. Its 1991 theme is "grow for tomorrow".

Headlining this year's congress is feature speaker Pete Luckett. Owner of Pete's Frootique in Saint John, New Brunswick, Luckett is well known to Canadians as CBC's "green grocer". "He'll discuss how to present yourself and your business to consumers," says Demers Collins. His presentation will immediately follow the congress's official opening by Shirley McClellan, Alberta's associate minister of agriculture.

Demers Collins says a number of popular speakers will be returning to this year's congress. They include Richard St. Pierre, a University of Saskatchewan saskatoon researcher, and Bill Bauerle, an greenhouse researcher from Ohio. "Twenty experts will present a whole range of horticultural topics in sessions of either half an hour or an hour," she says.

Among the session topics are innovation on a shoe-string, producing green house vegetables, raspberry research, pest control, mulch evaluation, u-pick vegetables in the 90s, packing technology, garlic production, marketing products and herb production and marketing.

"Another of the interesting sessions will be a buyer panel with wholesale, retail, foodservice and chef representatives discussing what they want in produce," she says. "As well, grower talks on cut flower markets and vegetable production should be informative."

Participants can also choose one of four tours going to central Alberta locations on November 2. "Three of the four follow a specific theme—florists, greenhouses, vegetable and fruit farms—plus, there's a tour of Olds College and its new horticulture programs," says Demers Collins.

A trade show is also part of the congress, as are meetings of five horticulture associations. These meetings will precede the congress official opening. Meeting will be: the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association (AGGA), Fruit Growers Society of Alberta (FGSA), the Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA), the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Marketing Board (AFVMB), and Flowers Canada (Alberta region).

Congress registration costs will increase after October 15, going from $70 to $100.

Con't on page 3

In the advent of a postal strike, congress registrations can be submitted to the nearest Alberta Agriculture district office. Registration packages are also available from district offices.

For more information about the congress and trade show, contact Demers Collins in Edmonton at 427-7366.

Contact: Simone Demers Collins
427-7366

Funding announcement enhances farm management skills program

A one year federal-provincial program will develop and deliver farm business management training programs to Alberta producers.

Federal Agriculture Minister Bill McKnight, Alberta Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley and Associate Minister Shirley McClellan announced the one-year, $1.7 million Canada-Alberta Farm Management Initiative late last month.

"This initiative allows both governments and the industry to work together in designing and implementing training programs that will enhance farmers' abilities to manage risk, adjust to changing markets and make full use of new technologies," says McKnight.

"The response to previous programs has been encouraging, and we are pleased to be able to work with Agriculture Canada to support the present level of training," Isley says.

"While we will continue to address pricing and marketing issues, we believe improving farmers' management abilities will prepare them to take advantage of opportunities as they arise," notes McClellan.

Agriculture Canada will contribute $950,000 which will be administered by the Rural Education Development Association (REDA), to develop, design, test and deliver new farm management skills training and development activities. The agreement expires March 31, 1992.

Courses will deal with such areas as record keeping, financial statements and decisions, farm business analysis, business and risk mangement, and marketing. Private sector agencies can apply to the program for funds to support the delivery of farm management training in 1991-92. Money has also been set aside for private sector research into future farm management needs and training opportunities.

Contact: J. Wilson Loree, Alberta Agriculture (403) 556-4213
C. Les Usher, Agriculture Canada (403) 495-5528

Autumn pine needle shed normal

Yellow and brown pine needles in the late summer and fall aren't necessarily a sign of a diseased tree says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"Most often this is just the natural shedding of needles," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton. "With pine trees, this autumn needle shed is particularly visible because of pines' open growth habit."

Pine trees usually keep their needles for three to four years. Eventually these needles turn color, yellowish brown, and fall off the tree. These needles aren't replaced. Instead, trees will get new growth on branch ends the following spring.

"While this natural process usually accounts for the needle shedding, it's a good idea to check your pine trees carefully for signs of insects or disease which may also have similar symptoms.

"As well, if trees are under stress from drought, poor soil fertility, transplant shock or pesticide damage, they may also shed needles," she says.

Pines aren't the only evergreens that shed their needles. Spruce trees shed their six or seven year old needles. "Because spruce are more dense than pine, the browning isn't as noticeable," she notes.

Needle shed is also very noticeable with cedar trees she adds.

"If you're still unsure about the cause of the brown needles and shedding, consult a horticulturist," she advises.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

Agri-News briefs

4-H Centre trails repaired by Shell Environmental Fund

Flood damage on the environmental trails at the Alberta 4-H Centre will be repaired with funding assistance from the Shell Environmental Fund. "We are pleased to be able to draw on this Fund for our worthwhile environmental project," says Angus Park, the centre's site committee chairman. The $3,000 cheque the 4-H Foundation of Alberta received is part of a $1 million annual contribution made by the Shell Environmental Fund to community groups and individuals across Canada. The fund is currently in its second year and has received more than 1,200 applications. Grants have ranged between $50 and $5,000, covering projects from habitat cleanup to waste reduction. For more information about the fund, call 1-800-661-1600 toll-free or write Box 100, Station M, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2H5. For more information about the 4-H Foundation of Alberta, contact Vicki Berger in Edmonton at 427-2541.

September time to divide rhubarb

For many Albertans, summer is heralded by the first harvest of rhubarb, but September is the time to manage large plants. "If your rhubarb plant is getting too big, or if you want to divide a plant, you should wait until fall after a hard frost to disturb the plant. Late September is usually the best time," says Pam North, horticulturist at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre. Two methods can be used she says. Either use a sharp spade to slice off a piece of the crown section of the plant, or lift the entire plant and divide it. "You want to have at least two eyes with the crown and some storage roots," she says. A number of rhubarb cultivars can be easily grown in Alberta. For more information, check the "*Alberta Horticultural Guide*" (Agdex 200/01) available from Alberta Agriculture district offices or from the Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. North can be contacted in Edmonton at 422-1789.

4-H foundation expands its board by two

Two new members-at-large have been added to the 4-H Foundation of Alberta. The Alberta 4-H Council appointed one of the new directors, auctioneer Tony Perlich of Lethbridge, who will serve a two-year term. The foundation selected Doug Livingstone, who will serve on the board until April 1994. Livingstone, former Alberta Wheat Pool president, is a Vermilion area farmer. The 4-H Foundation of Alberta is a registered charity responsible for raising and investing funds for the betterment of 4-H in Alberta. One of the foundation's major mandates is development and operation of the Alberta 4-H Centre. The foundation is also involved in several other projects including scholarship administration and handling bequests and memorial donations. For more information about either the foundation or centre, contact Vicki Berger, secretary manager, in Edmonton at 427-2541.

Coming agricultural events

The Masters and Equi-Fair '91
Spruce Meadows
Calgary . . . . . .September 4-8
Isabell Schipani – 254-3200 – Calgary

Crop Protection Institute of Canada 1991 conference:
"Achieving balance between high technology and sustainable agriculture"
Ramada Renaissance
Regina, Saskatchewan . . . . . September 15-18
CPIC office – (416)622-9711 – Etobicoke, Ontario

National Dairy Council of Canada annual general meeting and convention
Halifax Sheraton Hotel
Halifax, Nova Scotia . . . . . September 15-18
Dale Tulloch – (613)238-4116 – Ottawa, Ontario

Minnesota Swine Conference for Veterinarians
St. Paul Radisson Hotel
St. Paul, Minnesota . . . . . September 15-18
Jan Swanson – (612)624-3434 – St. Paul, Minnesota

Olde Tyme Sheep Fair
Olds Agricultural Grounds
Olds . . . . . September 21
Mike Rieberger – 224-3743 – Bowden

International conference on Land Degradation and Restoration in Arid Regions
Lubbock, Texas . . . . . September 23-25
Howard M. Taylor – (806)742-2837 – Lubbock, Texas

11th annual National Rural Families conference
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas . . . . . September 25-27
National conference office – (913)532-5575 – Manhattan, Kansas

8th World Congress of Food Science
Westin Harbour Castle
Toronto, Ontario . . . . . September 29-October 4
Congress office – (416)678-1229 – Mississauga, Ontario

Western Canadian Association of Swine Practitioners annual meeting
Delta Bessborough Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan . . . . . .October 18-19
Dr. C.S. Rhodes – (306)966-7145 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Stimulating Rural Economies for the 2000s conference
Camrose Regional Exhibiton Centre
Camrose . . . . . .October 23-25
Reg Kontz – 427-2171 – Edmonton;
Peter Apedaile – 492-4580 – Edmonton

Alberta Wheat Pool Conservation 2000 symposiums: "Conservation—Challenging the Future"
Lethbridge Lodge . . . . . .October 29
Jim Hahn – 382-3406 – Lethbridge
Medicine Hat Lodge . . . . . .October 30
Lawrence Nicholson – 527-6600 – Medicine Hat
Wainwright . . . . . .October 31
Ed Palmer – 853-5566 – Vermilion

Alberta Horticultural Congress and Trade Show
Westerner Altaplex
Red Deer . . . . . October 31-November 2
Simone Demers Collins – 427-7366 – Edmonton

Canadian Agricultural Finance Conference: "Farming, finance and your future"
Westin Hotel
Calgary . . . . . .November 3-6
Canadian Bankers Association – (416)362-6092 – Toronto, Ontario

Royal Winter Fair
Canadian National Exhibition
Toronto, Ontario . . . . . .November 5 -16
CNE – (416)393-6413 – Toronto, Ontario

Agri-Trade Farm Equipment and Services Exposition
Westerner Park
Red Deer . . . . . .November 6-9
Pat Kennedy – 347-4491 – Red Deer

High Technology and Animal Welfare symposium
The Lodge at Kananaskis
Kananaskis Village . . . . . .November 13-14
Faculty of Extension (University of Alberta) – 492-3029 – Edmonton

Alberta Irrigation Projects Association annual conference: "Managing water—a limited resource in a changing environment"
Lethbridge Lodge
Lethbridge . . . . . .November 17-19
Stan Klassen – 328-3063 – Lethbridge;
John Calpas – 320-3311 – Lethbridge

Oat Producers Association of Alberta annual conference
Edmonton Inn
Edmonton . . . . . .November 19-20
Emile deMilliano – 895-2219 – Lamont;
Peter Kirylchuk - Lac La Biche - 623-7732

Alberta Potato Industry annual conference
Kananaskis Lodge
Kananaskis Village November 26-30
Jan Brown – 291-2430 – Calgary

Alberta Beekeepers Association annual general meeting and convention
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton . . . . . .November 28-29
Gertie Adair – 489-6949 – Edmonton

Alberta Cattle Commission annual general meeting
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton . . . . . December 2-4
Ron Glaser – 275-4400 – Calgary

Conservation leadership skills program (presented by Conservation 2000 and CASCI)
Goldeye Centre
Nordegg, Alberta . . . . . December 4-6
JoAnne Meents – 290-4648 – Calgary;
Russ Horvey – 422-4385 – Edmonton

Alberta Sheep Symposium
The Lodge at Kananskis
Kananskis Village . . . . . December 5-7
Gerry Pitman – 295-1988 – Calgary

Western Stock Growers' Association 96th annual convention and short course
Capri Centre
Red Deer . . . . . December 10-12
Pam Miller – 250-9121 – Calgary

1992

Unifarm annual meeting
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton . . . . . January 6-9
Shirley Dyck – 451-5912 – Edmonton

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer . . . . . .January 10-13
Les Burwash – 297-6650 – Calgary

Soil Conservation Workshop and Alberta Conservation Tillage Society 14th annual meeting
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton . . . . . .January 13-15
Peter Gamache – 422-4385 – Edmonton;
Russ Evans – 936-5306 – Calgary

Canada West Equipment Dealers Association convention and general meeting
Westin Hotel
Calgary . . . . . .January 16-18
William Lipsey – 250-7581 – Calgary

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association convention and trade fair: "Cattle feeding and the next generation"
Marlborough Inn
Calgary . . . . . .January 16-18
Don Saynor – 250-2509 – Calgary

Alberta Canola Producers Commission annual convention
Hilton Hotel
Edmonton . . . . . .January 22-24
Nellie Waschuk – 452-6487 – Edmonton

Canadian Bull Congress
Camrose Exhibition Centre
Camrose . . . . . .January 24-25
Gordon Porteous – 672-3640 – Camrose

Western regional conference of the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD)
Westin Hotel
Calgary . . . . . January 31
Bryan Walton – 435-8823 – Edmonton

12th provincial Rural Crime Watch Workshop
Hanna Community Centre
Hanna . . . . . February 7-8
Dave Cattanach – 854-2435 – Hanna

Association of Alberta Agricultural Societies annual convention and quilt finals competition
Fantasyland Hotel/West Edmonton Mall
Edmonton . . . . . February 14-16
Eve Cockle – 427-2174 – Edmonton

60th Farm and Home Week
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan . . . . . February 17-21
Bruce Hobin – (306)966-5551 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

The International Agri & Ranch tradeshow
Stampede Park, Roundup Centre
Calgary . . . . . March 4-6
Al Batiuk – 469-2400 – Edmonton

Agriculture Links Up with Space, 2nd annual international conference
Camrose Exhbition Centre
Camrose . . . . . March 8-10
Gordon Porteous – 672-3640 – Camrose

Agriculture Week
(Alberta) . . . . . March 8-14
Bard Haddrell – 427-2127 – Edmonton

10th Western Canadian Dairy Seminar
Black Knight Inn
Red Deer . . . . . March 10-13
John Kennelly – 492-2133 – Edmonton

The Little Royal—Lakeland College open house
Vermilion campus, Lakeland College
Vermilion . . . . . March 20-22
Cathi Bishop – 853-8528 – Vermilion

International Sulphur Markets—Today and Tommorrow
Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City Hotel
Washington, D.C . . . . . April 1-3
The Sulphur Institute – (202)-331-9660 – Washington, D.C.

Feeders' Day 1992: "Dairy day"
Dairy research unit
Edmonton . . . . . May 28
John Kennelly – 492-2133 – Edmonton

Beef Congress
Westerner
Red Deer . . . . . June 16-18
Pat Kennedy – 347-4491 – Red Deer

Appli-Tech '92: "Agricultural chemical application technology for the '90s"
Western Canada Farm Progress Show
Regina, Saskatchewan . . . . . June 17-19
Bruce Hobin – (306)966-5551 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Canadian Agricultural Extension Council annual meeting
Fredericton, New Brunswick . . . . . June 21-23
John Tackaberry – 427-2409 – Edmonton

Agricultural Institute of Canada annual conference: "The family farm in the 21st century"
University of Brandon
Brandon, Manitoba . . . . . July 5-9
Red Forbes – (204)727-9702 – Brandon, Manitoba

First Canadian Master Gardeners conference
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan . . . . . July 26-29
Bruce Hobin – (306)966-5551 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Note: Alberta communities host a number of local, regional and international fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed in the "Coming Agricultural Events" list. A list of agricultural society fairs was compiled by the community and rural services branch and is available by writing the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.

Coming agricultural events

- Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in **December, 1991 or in January, February, March or later in 1992**? Are there any events omitted in the attached list?

- Please state the name of the event.

- What are the dates?

- Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

- Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a **contact person** for each event listed.

- This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by November 21, 1991 to:

Agri-News Editor
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming Agricultural Events is published four times a year in Agri-News. The next edition will be printed December 2, 1991)

AZ 1.691

AGRI-NEWS

September 9, 1991

Wheat marketing prayer, patience and planning

A wheat producer's marketing strategy can be summarized in three words says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst: prayer, patience and planning.

"These three 'Ps' are necessary given the current international market and Prairie conditions," says Charlie Pearson.

Planning applies to quota allocation he says. "Plan so you can maximize delivery opportunities for your wheat, by also planning how best to sell your other crops. For example, contract barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or sell locally, and market your canola at a crusher's."

Patience is related to quota announcements. "You'll have to wait for them. Wheat quotas will likely be made at similar times and magnitudes to the 1990-91 crop year," Pearson says.

Finally, he says, praying for dry harvest weather could help prices. Good fall weather will make a higher percentage of the 1991 Prairie wheat crop high quality, and better quality means a better price for the producer.

Pearson says international wheat prices are expected to remain at low levels for the rest of this year. "Starting early next year, international prices are expected to improve. This will be an improved reflection of the tighter 1991-92 world wheat supply demand balance."

Improvement in the international price could be beneficial for Canadian producers. "Price improvements in the international scene during the coming winter should allow room for a final payment on this year's crop," he says.

Currently international wheat prices are sticking at low levels, despite forecasts of a tighter world supply demand balance. World wheat production is expected to drop seven per cent, to 550 million tonnes, from the 1990-91 record total.

Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

Cattle markets toned down by August declines

Fed cattle prices shifted downward during August, and have tempered the outlook for fall feeder sales says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Feedlot buyers have reduced the price they expect at the other end, and large declines in the U.S. market have taken away from the enthusiasm of export buyers," says Ron Gietz. "On the other hand, fed and feeder prices have rebounded in the U.S. and cheap barley still leaves room for optimism.

"Overall, price prospects for this fall's calves have been toned down, but the fall run is still likely to be slightly above 1990 levels."

Another market factor is dry weather in northeastern Alberta he says. "There may be higher than normal marketings of breeding stock in this region, and that could depress prices slightly. But calf prices shouldn't be affected by the dry weather. The only potential impact may be an earlier than normal calf run in northern markets and slightly lighter calves on average."

Con't on page 2

This Week

Wheat marketing prayer, patience and planning	1
Cattle markets toned down by August declines	1
Fall fertilizer application can be effective	2
Timing, collecting, handling key to fall soil testing	3
Plan winter feeding well—feed test now	4
Strict guidelines control livestock antibiotic use	4
Party telephone lines are history in Alberta	5
Briefs	6

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Gietz has three market strategy suggestions for producers selling feeder cattle. "There's a definite relationship in this province between volume and price, so if dry weather prompts early marketings in your area, it might pay to postpone selling your calves," he says. In most parts of the province, peak runs are usually between mid-October and mid-November.

Heavy feeder cattle prices are likely to be relatively stable through the fall he says, and unless the producer has a surplus of fall pasture, there isn't much to be gained from keeping grass cattle around.

As well, he has a warning for producers who might consider buying and feeding calves as a way of marketing grain when barley prices are low. "Feeding cattle is a risky venture that won't usually bring a premium for your barley, except for the most efficient feedlots. Remember the going price of barley is built into feeder cattle prices."

Gietz notes there was a lot of red ink in feedlot ledgers during August. Early last month, for over a week, U.S. fed cattle prices posted daily, and sometimes twice daily, declines.

"A vicious feedback loop developed where lower wholesale prices prompted lower packer bids, and lower fed cattle prices led to still lower wholesale prices, starting the cycle again. Then panic added some momentum to the downward trend."

While there was an element of overreaction in the price crash, he adds, there were also strong fundamental reasons for the declines. These include seasonal increases in beef production, high slaughter weights and demand side problems including lower hide prices and poor consumer demand.

Since mid-August U.S. fed cattle prices have been gradually climbing out of the trench they fell into he says. "This gradual climb is further evidence that there was panic in the price declines. Another encouraging sign is slaughter numbers going above year-ago levels."

By late September or early October the available supply of fed cattle will likely start to dry up, and supplies will be progressively tighter later in the year. He estimates Alberta feedlot inventories to be at least as low as last year's tight levels. "This should aid local price prospects," he says.

Contact: Ron Gietz
427-5376

Fall fertilizer application can be effective

Applying nitrogen fertilizer in the fall can be a very effective management option, or a disappointment, says an Alberta Agriculture soil specialist.

"A number of factors related to the actual application as well as inter-related management decisions need to be considered in a fall fertilizer application," says Ross McKenzie, soils branch crop nutrition supervisor.

As a general rule, fall banded nitrogen application is as effective as the same operation in the spring across most soil types, except when soils are saturated for an extended period in the spring. "This type of condition occurs most frequently on the poorly to moderately well drained Black, Dark Gray and Gray Wooded soils in west central Alberta," he says.

On a comparison scale, spring and fall banding are more or less equal, and are the best fertilizer application options. Spring broadcast is next best, and least effective application is fall broadcasting he says. Its effectiveness decreases further with the length of time a soil is saturated.

"This evidence gives support to fall banding, but before you go out to fall fertilize, you have to give some thought to other considerations," he says. "For example, if saturated soil conditions aren't normally a problem then you may want to consider fall banding. But, if you're in an area where soils potentially will be saturated with water for a long period of time next spring, fall fertilization probably isn't a good option."

McKenzie advises doing a fall soil test to determine optimum fertilizer rates. "We always encourage producers to take soil samples to determine the amounts of nitrogen at various depths to two feet in the fall. If test results aren't available before you start fall fertilizing, a conservative application rate can be used. But again, waiting for soil test results is best."

The type of nitrogen fertilizer you plan to use also plays a role in the fertilizer's effectiveness. "Generally in southern Alberta, all nitrogen fertilizers—anhydrous ammonia (82-0-0), urea (46-0-0), ammonium nitrate (34-0-0) or liquid nitrogen (28-0-0)—work equally well when fall banded," he says.

However, high pH soils, saturated soils or warm soils can play a role in making the fertilizer less effective McKenzie notes. "Generally banding is preferred because it eliminates most of the losses associated with broadcast applications. Banding usually prevents ammonia volatilization losses but, they can occur with shallow banding into dry, lumpy high pH soil.

"As well, nitrate can be converted to gaseous nitrogen in saturated conditions, so nitrate fertilizers should be avoided when it's wet. Warmth can also be a problem, because urea and ammonia rapidly convert to nitrate when it's warm. So to avoid nitrate losses, urea and ammonia should be banded later in the fall after the soil has cooled to below 7°C.

"All this makes selecting the best nitrogen fertilizer complicated because there are so many factors to consider. You may want to consult with a soil fertility specialist before you make your final decision."

McKenzie also acknowledges a number of other farm management decisions can play a role in the decision to fall fertilize. Time management is one consideration as fall application saves the farmer one field operation in the spring and may allow for earlier seeding next spring. Fall banding can provide conservation benefits by helping conserve soil moisture, and the often drier fall soil conditions make soil compaction less likely.

Con't on page 3

Dollars and cents may also be a factor he says. "Fertilizer pricing and payment incentives are often more favorable in the fall, so it may be more economically desirable to purchase and apply fertilizer in the fall."

Availability of fertilizer and fertilizer application equipment are another part of the decision he says. Often availability of both is better in the fall than during peak spring demand.

McKenzie also notes most fertilizer dealers, fertilizer industry agronomists and Alberta Agriculture district agriculturists can provide information about fertilizer application. As well, producers can contact Doug Penney at the soils branch in Edmonton at 427-2530, Garry Coy in Fairview at 835-2291, or McKenzie in Lethbridge at 381-5126.

Contact: Dr. Ross McKenzie
381-5126

Timing, collecting, handling key to fall soil testing

A fall soil test can help you plan next year's crops and fertilizer decisions, but it's a management practice that must be done right to be beneficial says an Alberta Agriculture soils branch agronomist.

"Accurate test results and what the producer really needs to know, reliable recommendations, can only come from samples that have been done at the right time and collected correctly," says Len Kryzanowski.

Timing and depth of samples depend on what type of field is being sampled. Fallow and irrigated stubble fields should be sampled in the late fall—after mid-October and just before freeze-up. Soil samples should be taken to depths of 60 cm at intervals of zero to 15 cm, 15 to 30 cm and 30 to 60 cm. Non-irrigated stubble and established forage crop fields can be sampled as early as mid-September. Sampling in the zero to 15 cm depth may be adequate, but an additional 15 to 30 cm depth sample is desirable.

If the field has a fall seeded crop, samples can be taken up to one month before seeding. Recommended sampling depths depend on whether the field is fallow or stubble, and irrigated or not.

As well, sampling should be done before any fall fertilizer applications. "It's very difficult to collect a representative soil sample from a field that has had fertilizer applied prior to sampling," Kryzanowski says.

Good sampling also means proper collection he says. "There are several points that should be remembered when you collect a soil sample. By following these guidelines, you'll get as true a picture as possible of your fields."

Frozen and waterlogged soils shouldn't be sampled, and samples should be representative of a uniform area. "You might have to size up each field before you sample and subdivide it into different areas based on observed field variations in crop growth, yield, soil texture, soil color, land slope, degree of erosion, drainage and past management," he says. Also, he says to avoid unusual areas—back furrows, old straw, hay or manure piles, waterways, saline spots, eroded knolls and old fence rows. "If you do have an area where growth is significantly different from the rest of the field, take a separate sample," he says.

Each field requires random samples from 20 to 25 places to make a composite sample. Samples from each depth must be kept separate. Labs need about a pound of soil from each depth to do the analyses. Depth samples should be taken at the same time as surface samples.

"Proper handling is also key to reliable results," Kryzanowski says. "You have two choices. The best procedure is to spread the sample out immediately on a clean sheet of plastic and send the sample to the lab once it's air dried. Alternatively, the sample can be kept refridgerated for up to three days prior to delivery to a lab." He advises checking with the individual lab to see what method is preferred.

"Don't freeze the sample," he adds. "Research results from the Saskatchewan Soil Testing Laboratory indicate that freezing soil samples may cause significant changes in the nitrogen levels, so freezing should be avoided."

As well, he notes, if producers have been banding phosphate fertilizer they should tell their lab. "Results may be unusually high and recommendations can be adjusted if the lab is aware of the phosphate banding."

Each field requires an information sheet describing the planned crop and notes of any unusual problems. Producers should complete the information sheets in full for the laboratory and keep a duplicate copy

Kryzanowski recommends soil samples be sent to a reputable soil testing laboratory that uses soil analyses methods and recommendations based on research in Alberta. "There are a number of private laboratories that can provide quick analyses service along with fertilizer recommendations."

Soil test reports from samples should provide measurements of available nutrients including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur, and levels of soil pH, salinity, texture and free lime. Additional analyses can also be requested.

To obtain a soil sampling probe and information about soil testing, contact any Alberta Agriculture district office. Fertilizer dealers can also help. Information is also available from the Agricultural Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory, 9th floor, O.S. Longman Building, 6909-116 Street, Edmonton, T6H 4P2, or call 427-6361.

Contact: Len Kryzanowski
427-2530

Plan winter feeding well—feed test now

Testing feed is an essential aspect of planning winter feeding that is easily overlooked and often left too late says an Alberta Agriculture livestock nutritionist.

"Feed testing is a valuable management tool for livestock producers," says Abdul Suleiman of the Agricultural Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory in Edmonton. "Nutrient analysis of feeds provides producers with information about their feed quality. It allows them to make choices about what feeds to use first, and which ones to save for late gestation or after calving. Knowing the feed inputs and feeding properly balanced rations avoids wasting resources by overfeeding, or not reaching goals by underfeeding."

By planning well, and getting feed tested now before winter feeding begins, producers can take advantage of the benefits feed testing offers he adds. "Producers can ill afford to lose productivity through feeding inadequate or unbalanced rations when feeding costs account for between 50 and 60 per cent of total production costs. Investing in feed testing just makes good economic sense."

Nutrient analysis tells whether supplements are needed. A feed test alone doesn't readily provide all the practical information, so Suleiman recommends discussing winter feeding programs and choosing appropriate supplements with an Alberta Agriculture regional livestock specialist, district agriculturist, animal nutritionist, or a feed company representative.

Forage producers can also benefit from feed testing he adds. "You can market a product of known quality after a feed test, and this year testing your forages may be especially important given the trends we've seen so far at the lab."

Some low protein values have been observed in forage tests this year he says. Low protein can become an important factor if the feeds are destined for growing or pregnant stock, or are included in after-calving rations. In these cases nutrient requirements are considerably higher than for maintenance.

"Another observation of forages we've received this year is the number of analyses showing high nitrate in feeds from drought areas," he says. A feed test identifying high nitrates can help producers avoid and prevent cattle deaths from nitrate poisoning. High nitrate feeds can generally be diluted with low nitrate feeds, and then be safely fed to livestock without ill effects.

Eight laboratories throughout Alberta provide feed testing service. For sampling information, producers can contact their local Alberta Agriculture district office or the Agricultural Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory, 905, O.S. Longman Building, 6909 - 116 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 4P2 or call 427-6361.

Contact: Abdul Suleiman
427-6361

Strict guidelines control livestock antibiotic use

As long as producers follow federal guidelines when using antibiotics in their livestock feeds, they should be confident there aren't any attached risks says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"In the past 40 years antibiotics have provided both human and animal medicine with the ability to control a wide range of diseases, and antibiotics are still a vital part of animal disease treatment," says Trevor Jones, Fairview based regional livestock specialist. "Antibiotics are also a valuable feed addition that producers have at their disposal to control specific problems."

Various antibiotics are licensed in Canada for use in animal feeds. One example of that use is terramycin he says. It's licensed by Agriculture Canada and the Food and Drug Directorate in Ottawa for use in lamb and calf rations to control enterotexmia, a bloat and bacterial diarrhea. Guidelines for feeding, or subtherapeutic use, of terramycin and other antibiotics, are published in the "Compendium of Medicating Ingredient Brochure" (MIB). Allowable levels of medications, along with specific directions for use and the exact amount of withdrawal time before slaughter, are outlined in the MIB, which is subject to the Canada Feeds Act. The MIB brochure is available from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0S9. For the $3 cost, subscribers also receive three years of MIB updates.

"Provided the antibiotic is used in strict accordance with the MIB guidelines, then the use has the blessing of Agriculture Canada, and the medication's use shouldn't have dangers involved with it," Jones says.

However, despite the safety factors, some consumer concerns have been expressed with subtherapeutic use he notes. Particularly concerns have been raised about development of bacterial resistance, and that resistance becoming common. An extensive national study two years ago came up with definitive answers about the potential problem of bacterial resistance he notes.

The Canadian Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) study concluded that feeding form (subtherapeutic use of) antibiotics may contribute less toward development of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria than the therapeutic (injectable) form. "In total, CAST found no conclusive evidence that the subtherapeutic use should be stopped," he says.

"This leaves producers with a clear direction about the use of antibiotics in disease treatment," Jones adds. "The diagnosis and treatment must be clearly defined by a practising veterinarian. The disease must be properly diagnosed, and the antibiotic used exactly as prescribed. In all cases, the directions for treatment time and slaughter date must be followed scrupulously."

Con't on page 5

Antibiotics can either destroy or stop the growth of bacteria. They have been described as "magic" because of their ability to control a wide range of diseases. Not all antibiotics kill all bacteria, nor are they equally effective in treating diseases. "For these reasons, their use in the treatment of diseases should be left to veterinarians," he says.

Contact: Trevor Jones
835-2291

Party telephone lines are history in Alberta

When Frank Sigurdson picks up his telephone at 10 to five in the afternoon to order parts, he'll know his line isn't busy. The Markerville farmer, like all other rural producers, no longer shares his telephone line with neighbours but, has individual line service.

Sigurdson and his wife Ellen were on hand at a ceremony to celebrate the completion of the individual line service program and to help officially retire the party line telephone. The brief ceremony at the AGT Museum in Edmonton also included Fred Stewart, minister of technology, research and telecommun- ications, and Hal Neldner, president and chief executive officer of TELUS Corporation, AGT's parent company.

To mark the historic occasion, Stewart presented the museum with one of the last party line telephones taken out of service. The black wall telephone from the St. Paul area was mounted with a plaque and given to the museum to commemorate the retirement of rural multi-line service.

The end of the party line era brings a number of benefits to rural Albertans. One is the same access to global telecommunications services—including modems, answering machines and fax machines—available to other Albertans. Stewart noted that and other benefits, and said assurance of privacy may mean more to rural telephone users than the access to technology. "Albertans have found that their new individual telephone lines give them freedom of access and an access to privacy. It means rural Albertans can pick up the phone and call anyone at anytime they want giving them a feeling of safety and security most of us have come to take for granted."

Completed under budget and on schedule, the individual line service program was announced by Alberta Premier Don Getty in 1986. The first installations weren't until September 1987, with Mirror the first community to receive the service.

The $222.1 million program brought approximately 115,500 rural telephone subscribers the new service, plus brought in 26,000 pre-program individual line subscribers. Costs were shared, 75 per cent by the province with funds from the Alberta Savings and Heritage Trust Fund, and 25 per cent by the subscribers themselves.

During the course of the program over 330 jobs were created, approximately 117,900 individual lines were installed, and over 36,591 km of cable was laid. This distance equals travelling between Halifax and Vancouver seven times.

Neldner noted that the individual line service program was part of a more than half billion dollar program of updating and modernizing of AGT service in the province.

Stewart made presentations to Neldner and Bob David, of Edmonton Telephones, to recognize and thank their employees' contributions to the successful project.

Contact: Tony Myers, Technology, Research & Telecommunications, 422-0567
Ron Liepert, AGT Ltd., 493-4838

Agri-News briefs

Second consecutive bipartite feeder lamb plan payment

Continued seasonally low market prices for Alberta slaughter lambs through the second quarter of 1991 have produced a second consecutive bipartite plan payout to Alberta slaughter lamb producers. Eligible producers must be enrolled in the Alberta Purchased Feeder Lamb Stabilization Plan introduced by the Alberta government in February. In its first five months the plan has provided benefits of $90,000 on 13,000 eligible lambs. The Alberta plan was introduced to offer the safety net aspects of the National Tripartite Lamb Plan to slaughter lamb producers. Following a lengthy set of unsuccessful negotiations with other current provincial participants in the national plan, Alberta decided to go it alone in offering support to this relatively new Alberta enterprise. Bipartite payments will cover part of the losses incurred by purchasing feeder lambs and providing normal season slaughter lamb supplies to slaughter facilities across Canada. The plan is similar to national ones, except the premiums will be shared equally by only the provincial government and producers. For more information, contact Herb Lock in Edmonton at 422-0137.

Red fescue market stronger than month ago

Creeping red fescue growers benefited from a stronger market than was anticipated a month ago says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Grower prices for common no.1 seed are about 30 cents per pound. Expected prices were for the low 20 cent range," says Al Dooley. For several weeks Canadian trade appears to have been paying more to farmers than what the U.S. export market would bear once cleaning, bagging and freight were accounted for he says. "This price increase began with a couple of firms being short and bidding up prices to obtain their requirements." Dooley adds the 1991 fescue crop appears to be only about half or less of the 1990 crop. The smaller crop, combined with the price jump, has made farmers reluctant to sell new crop fescue despite their large 1990 carryover. "The recent price spike has raised expectations of further price increases," he says. While prices are still relatively poor from an historic perspective, they are five cents per pound higher than during the 1990-91 crop year. For more information, contact Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5387.

Northern barley producers should consider CWB contract

Producers in northern Alberta who don't have a nearby livestock feed market should consider using the CWB barley contracting program early says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. Current initial payments will likely be adjusted upward some time during the crop year to more accurately reflect international feed grain prices says Charlie Pearson. "Providing the CWB with steady flows of barley during the crop year puts them in a better position to market your crop for the best price." Producers in areas with active feed markets should probably avoid the harvest delivery rush and market the majority of their crop during the coming winter he adds. For more information on feed grain, wheat and oilseed markets, contact Pearson in Edmonton at 427-5386.

"Credibility crunch of science" in food safety video

Scientific and technological advances in agriculture and food industries are a boon to all of us Elizabeth Whelan says in a new 28-minute video addition to the Alberta Agriculture Film Library. Eating, like other activities, can't be made 100 per cent risk free. However, sometimes reports leave people with the impression that science and technology somehow make our food less safe. Whelan, president of the American Council of Science and Health, disagrees with that point of view in her live keynote seminar from a recent Ontario Institute of Agrologists conference. For lending information about "Food safety: The credibility crunch of science" (Agdex 931-12), write the Film Library at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

AGRI-NEWS

September 16, 1991

Minister announces assessment of northeast agricultural production

Alberta's agriculture minister has announced a formal review of the extent of dry conditions affecting crops, forage and pasture in 10 municipalities in northeastern Alberta.

The move comes in response to concerns raised by local MLAs, as well as by Alberta Agriculture staff and producers who attended a meeting in Willingdon on August 14. A government committee has been struck to assess production levels and to study the effects of low moisture levels on the livestock sector in the northeast.

"Existing programs such as crop insurance and the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) provide protection against declines in grain prices and production losses due to drought, hail or frost," says Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley. "However, forages are not covered by GRIP, and crop insurance may not fully address the problems associated with dry dugouts or the lack of feed and forage for livestock."

Isley also points out that the province has recently joined the Net Income Stabilization Account program (NISA), and that Alberta farms earning $100,000 in eligible sales will qualify for more than $3,500 in benefits before the end of the calendar year.

In consultation with the St. Paul, Redwater-Andrew, Athabasca-Lac La Biche, Lloydminster and Vermilion-Viking MLAs, Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan, and Ray Speaker, the minister responsible for Public Safety Services, a review committee comprised of Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance and Alberta Public Safety Services representatives has been formed. The committee will be reviewing rainfall and production data, water and feed supplies, and other related information. As well, the committee will be looking at existing programs and how they might be of assistance to producers in the area. The review is expected to be complete by the end of September.

Isley says he regrets that he and area MLAs were unable to attend the Willingdon meeting, which was called on short notice, due to prior commitments. He adds staff who attended the meeting briefed him fully on the matters discussed. Isely says producer requests for a $75 per acre payment may be out of the government's reach, due to large commitments to safety net programs such as crop and forage insurance, GRIP and NISA.

Once the committee has completed its assessment, the government will develop an appropriate response within its financial means. The agriculture ministers, together with local MLAs and other government officials, hope to meet with northeastern farmers sometime this fall.

Contact: Brad Klak Executive Assistant to the Minister 427-2137
Ken Moholitny Central program support 422-9167

Early harvest weather good

A warm, dry August provided good harvest conditions across Alberta says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist.

"While the weather was great for harvesting it did have some other drawbacks. Unfortunately the continued hot, dry weather reduced pasture and crop growth and worsened problems with

Con't on page 2

This Week

Minister announces northeastern agricultural production assessment	1
Early harvest weather good	1
Shelterbelt trees going fast	2
New microcomputer programs analyze machinery costs	2
4-H environmental project emphasizes "power of one"	3
New senior 4-H project broadens opportunities	3
Save geraniums before first frost	4
Planting time for spring bulbs	4
Briefs	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

water supply shortages in northeastern Alberta," says Peter Dzikowski of the conservation and development branch.

Monthly temperatures were 1.5 to 4.5$C above the August normal he says. "The first half of the month was very warm. The latter half was cooler than the first half, but still recorded above normal temperatures. As well, there were almost no frost problems during the month."

Rainfall divided into two patterns on a north-south basis during August. Rainfall was generally above normal in southern Alberta—except for the extreme southeast—and, generally below normal in north central and northern Alberta. The lowest total reported for the month was the Cold Lake Airport's 17.8 mm, 23 per cent of its normal August total. On the high end of monthly totals was the 129 mm reported in Sedgewick, 211 per cent of its August normal. Bow Island also had a wet month reporting 88.6 mm of rain, two and half times its normal for August.

Looking back over the growing season Dzikowski says 1991 had above normal temperatures and rainfall in most locations. The provincial rainfall average for May 1 to August 31 was 280.7 mm, about 15.5 per cent above the normal value of 243.1 mm. On the temperature side, the provincial average for the four months was 15$C, about 0.8$ warmer than normal. The provincial value is an average of 49 Alberta weather station he notes.

"These overall averages hide the fact that it was wet through May and June, but quite dry during July and August," he says. The dry weather in those two months caused problems for farmers in northeastern Alberta he adds. Crop season rainfall totals varied from a low of 155.1 mm at Elk Point, 58 per cent of its normal, to a high of 443.1 mm at Red Deer, 160 per cent of its normal value.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

Shelterbelt trees going fast

November 1 may be the application deadline for shelterbelt seedlings, but anyone planning to order trees should do so as soon as possible says an Alberta Agriculture shelterbelt specialist.

"To avoid disappointment, and to get the trees that you want, order now," says Brendan Casement. "For example, while we had 50 per cent more Northwest poplars than last year, they have already all been assigned."

Seedlings are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis he reminds, so early orders are important. "In some cases all of the available seedlings of particular types have been allocated months before the final application deadline."

Trees and shrubs for farmstead shelterbelts can be ordered through the Alberta Shelterbelt Program. Farmers pay for any plants ordered through this program.

Six varieties of trees for field shelterbelts are being made available to farmers free of charge through the Canada/Alberta Soil Conservation Initiative (CASCI). An application fee still applies and there is also usually a delivery charge from the municipality. In order to qualify for this use, trees must be used on field shelterbelts at least 500 m long and be shown on a sketch map attached to the application form.

Field shelterbelts provide at least three conservation benefits. They reduce soil erosion caused by wind and reduce wind damage to crops. The shelterbelt traps and retains snow providing increased moisture for crop growth, and also reduces moisture loss from evaporation.

For more information about field shelterbelts and conservation, copies of "Field shelterbelts for soil conservation" (Agdex 277-20-3) are currently available from Alberta Agriculture district offices.

Application forms for field and farmstead shelterbelt seedlings are available from Alberta Agriculture district offices and from municipal agricultural fieldmen.

Contact: Brendan Casement
422-1789

New microcomputer programs analyze machinery costs

Two new microcomputer programs released by Alberta Agriculture can help farmers work through farm machinery costs.

The programs, "Leasing versus buying farm machinery" (LVBFM) and "Machinery costs" (MachCost), are based on previous programs developed by the farm business management branch in Olds.

Both programs are farm management tools says David Thacker. "An accurate knowledge of farm machinery costs can be valuable in making many farm management decisions."

LVBFM is designed to quickly and accurately compare the added cash costs of buying farm machinery to the added cash costs of leasing farm machinery he says. "It uses information you supply such as purchase price, interest rates, planning horizon, lease type and income tax effects to do the comparison."

Several types of leases can be evaluated by the program including an operating lease, a capital lease and an operating lease with buyout option. As well, LVBFM uses the capital budgeting technique of present value analysis to compare the different types of lease and purchase agreements. Cash outflows from leasing or purchasing are calculated, and the net present value of total cash outflows are compared. "This technique incorporates the time value of money, and allows you to compare different investments on an equal basis," he says.

Con't on page 3

MachCost offers a fast and accurate calculation of the costs of owning a particular machine. It calculates the ownership costs, operating costs and total after-tax costs of any machine, both on a per year and per hour basis. "By supplying machine capacity, fuel costs, repair costs, interest rates, list price and other information, the program can help you make an analysis," Thacker says.

This program also uses present value analysis to calculate machinery costs accurately over a period of time. It calculates ownership costs and operating costs, then combines them to determine the total either on a before-tax or after-tax basis.

Ownership costs are those costs incurred regardless of the actual use of the machinery and include aging and deterioration. Operating costs are those for running the machine such as lubrication, fuel and repairs.

Both programs come with comprehensive user manuals, and are also designed to complement existing Alberta Agriculture publications. LVBFM complements "Leasing versus buying farm machinery" (Agdex 825-19), while MachCost is modelled after concepts in "Know your farm machinery costs" (Agdex 825-6).

Copies of the LVBFM and MachCost programs are available free of charge from the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0. "If you'd like a copy, send us a blank disk and we'll send you a copy of the program you requested," he says. Both programs will fit on either a 3.5 or a 5.25 inch double density diskette. Copies of the related Agdex publications will be mailed back with the program diskettes.

Both programs are based on previous ADA123 spreadsheet templates that have been completely revised notes Thacker. Both were also developed under Lotus 123, then compiled with BalerXE so they don't require Lotus to run.

Also available from the department's Publications Office (7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6) is the "Agricultural Software Directory 1991" (Agdex 818-27). This fifth edition, and its supplement, contain a list of agriculture software for on-farm and institutional use available in Alberta, Canada and the United States.

Contact: David Thacker
556-4240

4-H environmental project emphasizes "power of one"

Alberta Agriculture's 4-H branch has introduced a new project designed to show members that their everyday activities affect the environment, and that they can improve the environment.

Titled "For my club, my community and my country", the new environmental project emphasizes the "power of one" says Penny Wilkes, a provincial 4-H specialist. "We're optimistic that the new project will lead members to several conclusions about themselves, their lives and their environment: that their actions effect the local and global environment; that by making lifestyle changes they can make a difference, that they can encourage others to change their lifestyle; and, that they can provide leadership in their own communities."

Junior and intermediate project materials are available for provincial 4-H clubs to use during the 1991-92 club year. Senior materials will be released next fall. "We'll be doing a major promotion of the complete project during our annual provincial leader's conference in January 1992," she notes.

The basic project materials come in a lesson plan format. The junior and intermediate level materials have three major sections. In the first, members analyze their own behavior and relate it to the environment around them. "For example, they start by looking at sources of energy and ways energy can be saved or wasted by matching an energy saving activity with actions that use energy. The lessons move on to 'one person's garbage' applying recycling, reducing, reusing and repairing concepts," says Wilkes.

In the second major section, 4-Hers explore the relationship between modern farming and the environment. These lessons take them through the value of trees and wetlands and the use of farm fuel and pesticides.

Finally, the project encourages members to take on a community project. Suggested activities range through starting a recycling project to making a municipal presentation. "By underscoring the power of an individual, the project builds the confidence and communication skills of 4-H members, so they are able to go out and initiate change," Wilkes says.

Contact: Penny Wilkes
427-2541

New senior 4-H project broadens opportunities

Alberta Agriculture's 4-H branch has revamped and streamlined two former projects into a senior opportunities project that promises to broaden the horizons and sharpen skills of senior 4-H members.

The new project offers senior members three alternatives says Penny Wilkes, a provincial 4-H specialist. Individuals can choose from 'exploring your interest', 'sharing your skills' or 'organizing a major event'. "The first two choices are really the old self-determined project and junior leadership project. The new senior opportunities combines and replaces these two plus adds another choice, organizing a major event. What it does is set out—in a single place—the types of interest-driven, personally-designed projects senior 4-Hers may want to consider," she says.

All aspects of the new program are designed to sharpen the planning, evaluation and leadership skills of senior 4-H members. Seniors are between the ages of 15 and 21 years she notes. "Some of these members have been long time members, who want and need new challenges within the 4-H

Con't on page 4

program. The alternatives in the opportunities project give them those broader experiences," Wilkes says.

For example, the exploring your own interest option allows senior members to take a particular 4-H project stream further she says. "A clothing member might want to learn how to sew leather, something that isn't explored in existing project units. A computer club member might want to do more advanced program designing. So, this alternative can be an extension of a traditional stream. However, the member's imagination and interest are the boundaries."

In a 'sharing your skills' project, the member, in consultation with their 4-H leader, chooses an area of responsibility within the club or district, and then has complete control in developing and monitoring the activity. Wilkes says this is basically the former junior leadership project, and can encompass such activities as teaching public speaking skills to junior members or assisting club members with record keeping.

The final option formalizes roles many senior 4-Hers have taken on in past few years she says. The 'organizing a major event' alternative requires the members plan and carry out a major event such as a tour or exchange for their club, district or region.

"Many senior 4-Hers are honing their leadership skills at these sorts of activities already. The formal project can give them a little extra guidance and direction, as well as credit for their work," says Wilkes.

Among the types of major events senior 4-Hers have taken on are organizing exchanges with 4-H clubs in other provinces or the United States, or writing a complete club or district history.

Contact: Penny Wilkes
427-2541

Save geraniums before first frost

This year's geraniums can still bloom brightly next summer if you save them before the first heavy frost says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"By digging up geraniums before they are injured by frost you can save this annual flower and overwinter it for next summer," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton.

Once dug up, gardeners can try one of two storing methods. In the first, place plants close together in a box or another container. Cut back the branches to 2.5 cm stubs. Cover the roots with a light potting soil or a mixture of peat moss and vermiculite or perlite. Then place in a cool, dark location at a temperature between 4 and 7°C.

"The geraniums should be watered before you store them. Then, during the winter, water them only enough to prevent the roots from shrivelling, but do allow the soil to dry out completely between waterings," she says.

The second method doesn't use soil. Instead, shake soil off the geranium roots, then hang the plants upside down in a cool, dry place. It's important not to cut the tops off in this method she adds.

North says the roots can be brought out of storage in late February. "At that time they can be potted in individual containers in a high quality potting soil. Then, place them in a sunny window, preferably one with a southern exposure."

She adds if gardeners want to take cuttings off the plants to start more geraniums, they should bring the old plants up in January to allow for extra growing time.

For more information on storing geraniums or starting geranium cuttings, contact North in Edmonton at 422-1789.

Contact: Pam North 422-1789

Planting time for spring bulbs

If you'd like to tiptoe through your own tulips next spring, you need to plant those bulbs soon says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"Spring bulbs can give you a colorful start to the season, but you need to buy and plant those bulbs in the fall," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre.

Tulips, daffodils, crocus, grape hyacinth and scilla are among the commons bulbs Alberta gardeners use to herald spring. These bulbs can be planted in September, or as soon as they appear in stores. "At the very latest, plant spring bulbs at least three weeks before the ground freezes as this allows the roots to establish," says North.

Success with your spring bulbs starts with making good choices when you buy them. Bulbs should be large and firm with no signs of mold growth.

Second, choose the right location. Most locations around a yard are suitable, but good drainage is an important consideration. She recommends avoiding southern exposures near buildings. These areas warm up first in spring and can encourage early growth susceptible to late spring frosts.

Before planting bulbs, prepare the soil by digging at least 30 cm into the bulb site. Add 2.5 to five cm of peat moss and mix into the top 15 cm of the soil. Fertilize with 10-30-10, bone meal, or a bulb fertilizer such as 4-10-8. The fertilizer should be incorporated into the top 15 cm of the soil.

"How deep the bulbs should be planted depends on the bulb type," she says, and adds all the recommended depths are from the soil surface to the base of the bulb. Tulips should be planted at 20 cm, daffodils at 25 cm, and, scilla, crocus and grape hyacinth at 10 to 12 cm.

Mulching may be necessary in a warm, sunny location to keep the ground frozen and prevent too early spring growth. To prevent this problem, North advises applying a six to eight cm mulch of peat or clean straw after the ground freezes.

Contact: Pam North 422-1789

Agri-News briefs

Stimulating rural economies conference in Camrose Oct. 23-25

A rural development specialist from France headlines the speakers at a national conference in Camrose October 23 through 25. Christine Kovacshazy is among a number of rural researchers, planners and policy makers who will discuss "stimulating rural economies in the 2000s". The conference is third in a series of five annual national conferences organized by the Agricultural and Rural Restructuring Group (AARG). Anyone interested and experienced in rural issues would benefit from attending the conference. Dependence of rural communities on a single major resource industry is a major theme of the conference. For registration and other information, contact the Camrose Regional Exhibition Association at 672-3640.

Call for entries in 10th annual Alberta Export Awards

The entry deadline for the 10th annual Alberta Export Awards is September 23. The awards celebrate the province's export success stories and recognizes companies with proven records in marketing products and services in foreign markets. All Alberta companies that have engaged in export activities during the last three years may submit an application for an award. There are 14 awards including firm of the year and sectoral awards. For entry forms or more information, companies can contact Joe Hak or Don Clarke at Alberta Economic Development and Trade, 11th Floor, Sterling Place, 9940-106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2P6, call 427-4809 or FAX 422-9127.

Fjord field day in Olds Oct.6

The Alberta Fjord Horse Association will hold a field day at the Olds Cow Palace on Sunday October 6. Presentations of the breed's versatility in riding and driving demonstrations will start at 10 a.m. and run through 4 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be available. For more information contact the association at Box 396, Station T, Calgary, T2H 2G9, or call 279-7119.

Water part of fall lawn care recipe

No fertilizer, but do add water is the recipe for fall lawn care says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist. "Watering your lawn in the fall may be necessary if there isn't a lot of fall rain. Moisture is important to prevent the lawn from drying out, and so there's available moisture for the roots in the spring," says Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton. Lawns don't need water as frequently as they do in the summer she cautions, but if fall weather is dry, lawns should be watered occasionally. Watering can continue until the ground freezes, or until the end of October or early November. There is no magic time to stop mowing lawn she notes. If grass keeps growing, then it doesn't hurt to continue mowing. "The importance is in not letting the lawn to get too long, or to cut it too short."Cutting grass too short in the fall can cause problems. "This exposes the crowns to freezing or desiccation injury, particularly if there isn't enough snow cover," North says. A normal mowing height of four to five centimetres (one and half to two inches) is best she adds. For more information, contact North in Edmonton at 422-1789.

Arabians win Battle of the Breeds

The Arabian breed has claimed the crown as the most versatile horse with a win at the second annual "Battle of the Breeds" competition at Spruce Meadows. The special feature competition of the Alberta Breeds for the World showcase attracted 15 breed teams. Team Arabian emerged victorious after the eight events which included freestyle, barrel racing, obstacle driving and a champagne ride. Team Quarterhorse were this year's runners up with last year's winner, Team Paint third. The Alberta Breeds for the World showcase is part of the annual Spruce Meadows Masters celebration of the horse which includes international show jumping along with an equine trade fair. Part of the Masters since 1984, this year's breeds showcase included 19 feature breeds. Les Burwash, Alberta Agriculture horse specialist, says for Alberta horse breeders Alberta Breeds for the World at the Masters is the most significant function that promotes and stimulates interest in the horse industry. For more information, contact Burwash in Calgary at 297-6650.

AGRI-NEWS

September 23, 1991

Copper unexpected solution to better wheat yields on sandy soils

Alberta Agriculture specialists have found that copper is the key to producing better wheat, barley and oat crops on some soils.

A research team with specialists from the department's soils and crop protection branches have been studying the effects of copper fertilizers on wheat, barley and oats over the last few years. Previously, they linked copper deficiency to low yields, poor quality, melanosis and ergot infestations in wheat and barley.

This year their research was focused on investigating several production problems suggested to be related to copper deficient soils says Ieuan Evans, one of the researchers and supervisor of plant pathology in the crop protection branch. "What we've seen so far indicates there may be a full range of interrelated symptoms of copper deficiency, particularly in wheat crops. As well, copper fertilizers may strongly influence at least three diseases, and consequently crop yield and quality."

Sandy and light loam soils are those most likely to be copper deficient. Between two and three million acres of cultivated land in Alberta may be deficient in copper, one of the 16 essential nutrients for plant growth. That number of acres make this research of particular importance to Alberta farmers says Evans, as it will likely have a major positive impact on cereal yield and quality. "These types of sandy soils are where many farmers said they couldn't grow good wheat. Our research has shown that when you add copper fertilizer, not only does it result in phenomenal yield increases in wheat, but the added copper also virtually eliminates three diseases."

Those three diseases are take-all, ergot and melanosis. Take-all is a root disease, sometimes known as charcoal root rot, that causes the crowns of wheat to rot after heading out so no grain kernels are produced. Ergot, a fungal disease, produces hard black kernel-like structures that replace the seed in the plant head. Melanosis is a brown stem pigmentation of some wheat cultivars associated with severely reduced yield and quality.

Evans says some of the most visible results of adding copper were seen at soils branch plots near Spruce Grove and Millet. Eight varieties of wheat were used, and he adds the results were similar for all the varieties. "What we saw was quite dramatic. The plots with the extra copper fertilizers had plump kernels and generally an excellent yield. The checks without the extra copper were shorter, much less vigorous and had high levels of ergot and take-all with yields of zero to 50 per cent of the copper fertilized plots."

Another significant part of their research shows that what has been considered an acceptable background level of copper on sandy soil, might not be effective. This may mean a rethinking of appropriate copper nutrient levels for particular soils, and what copper levels crops growing on those soils may require.

Research, headed by Doug Penney and Elston Solberg of the soils branch, will continue in co-operation with a number of private sponsors, the Alberta Agriculture Research Institute and Farming For the Future.

Con't on page 2

This Week

Copper unexpected solution to better wheat yields on sandy soils	1
Sampling know how key to feed analysis	2
Video introduces farm conservation planning concepts	2
Frost signals time to dig summer bulbs	3
Try fall seeding for earlier veggie crop	3
Alberta Agriculture appointments	4
Briefs	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

The research plots in 1991 were scattered around Alberta. Sites on suspect soils included Stony Plain, Millet, Wetaskiwin, Legal, Bear Hills and Tofield. Similar soils may make up to as much as 10 per cent of the province's arable land.

Contact: Dr. Ieuan Evans, Doug Penney, Elston Solberg
427-7098, 427-2530, 427-2530

Sampling know how key to feed analysis

Sampling is the weak link in feed analysis says an Alberta Agriculture laboratory nutritionist.

"Feed analysis provides valuable information livestock producers can often use to their advantage," says Abdul Suleiman of the Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory. "Knowing the quality of feeds available helps you decide what feeds to use and when to use them."

Feeding programs, or ration recommendations, are developed using the results of lab analysis on a submitted sample. "It's of utmost importance, since so much is riding on sample analysis, that the sample submitted for testing be representative of feeds on the farm. The analysis needs to reflect the true quality of the feed supply," he says. One sure way to achieve this is by taking a representative sample.

But, he adds, sampling is the weak link in the process, and where the most errors can occur. "Analysis of a feed sample taken with care can achieve a lot. If there are sampling errors, an entire feeding program can be affected."

Suleiman says samples should be taken before the feeding period begins. He recommends, whenever possible, feeds be sampled at harvest time, or as the feeds are being put up, so adjustments can be made before feeding starts. As well, each type of feed in a feeding program should be sampled and analyzed separately.

"This applies to grains as well as forages. Each forage cutting should be sampled. The same grain or forage type grown in different fields aren't necessarily similar in nutrient content. They can differ, and the best way to know what you're working with is to have your feeds analyzed."

While one of the most important considerations in sampling is obtaining a representative sample, the way types of feeds are sampled do differ. For example, baled hay is most accurately sampled with a core sampler. (Core samplers are available from Alberta Agriculture district offices or from feed company representatives.)

There is also a difference between sampling round and rectangular bales he adds. One sample from the middle of at least 20 different bales are required when sampling rectangular bales. On the other hand, round bales should be sampled from their round surface, and not the ends, also preferably near the middle of the bale. In both cases, the core samples should be put directly into a polyethylene sample bag to avoid leaf loss.

The best method for sampling cut forages is by hand. A representative sample requires samples from at least 20 different locations in a stack or, with silage, taking samples as it's being put up. Place the sub-samples in a pail and mix thoroughly. Transfer the one pound representative sample from the pail to a plastic bag. If the forage is very dry, skip the pail step, and put the sample directly into a plastic bag.

His tips for ensiled forage or high moisture grain include: take a handful from each of 20 locations on the feeding edge of a bunker or pit-type silo; in tower silos, collect samples after the unloader has been running for two to three minutes; and, to avoid spoilage in transit to a lab, freeze the sample before mailing. He also notes producers may need to sample ensiled feeds several times during the feeding period.

If producers are using cubed or pelleted forage, follow the same basic procedure: take a representative sample from at least 20 locations and in a sufficient quantity to make up about one pound for testing.

When sampling grain, the most convenient time to collect the sample is at harvest time when it's being augered into the storage bin. Suleiman recommends taking a small sample from each truckload in a particular field until its harvest is complete. This gives a good mix to take a representative sample from. If the grain sample was missed during harvest, randomly sample from the bin or bins using a grain probe. Mix well and take a representative sample. Representative samples should be about one pound.

On-farm mixed feed should be sampled as it's discharged from the mixer. "Since a mixed feed is likely to contain supplements, such as a protein feed or a mineral, the trick is to try to avoid sorting or settling of these ingredients to the bottom. Do this by mixing 20 or so sub-samples thoroughly and using care when taking your one pound sample," Suleiman says.

Contact: Abdul Suleiman
427-6361

Video introduces farm conservation planning concepts

Farmers talk about conservation planning as an important part of good long term farm management in a new Alberta Agriculture video.

"'Farm conservation planning' is an introduction to the concepts in developing an individual farm conservation plan and features the real experts, farmers who have developed their own plans," says Tom Goddard of Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch. Appearing in the production are farmers from the Carmangay, Elk Point and Drumheller areas.

Con't on page 3

While brief, at under 15 minutes in length, the production discusses the problems of soil and water degradation, and then moves on to show planning tools and how an overall farm conservation plan can provide solutions to productivity losses.

"Best use management practice is by soil type," says Goddard. "The production talks about some of the ways to identify your soil types, from air photos to walking through fields and taking soils samples below the surface.

"Conservation planning is practical, and the video shows how it can make your day-to-day operation run better as well as ensure better long term productivity," he adds.

In particular, two farmer's conservation plans, one in southern and one in northern Alberta, are featured. "This gives people who watch the video a concrete example of how planning works and how flexible plans are to suit soil types, fields and climate. It also demonstrates that conservation plans are as individual as farmers and their fields, and can change over time."

Doing a farm conservation plan is also relatively inexpensive adds Goddard. "Air photos are a minimal cost. The real cost is in the farmer's time to put together the plan. And, taking that time has real long term benefits because conservation planning is a way to maintain and improve your livelihood."

The 13 minute production is available in both 16 mm film and video formats. All Alberta Agriculture district offices will have the video (Agdex 516-7) in their district video libraries notes Goddard.

He says the video would be a useful tool at conservation planning workshops, as well as complement workshops and seminars related to soil, water and crop management.

For district video library lending information, contact your nearest Alberta Agriculture district office. Both film and video versions of "Farm conservation planning" are also available from Alberta Agriculture's Film Library. For lending information, write it at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Contact: Tom Goddard
422-6530

Frost signals time to dig summer bulbs

Frost not only signals an end to summer, it also means it's time to take special care of flowering bulbs says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"Common summer flowering bulbs, such as begonias, dahlias and gladiolus, aren't hardy. They must be lifted in the fall and stored indoors over the winter," says Pam North, of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton.

"Each type of bulb requires different treatment," she adds. For example, begonias can be dug up before or after the first frost. Tops should be left intact and as much soil as possible should be left on the tubers. Store in an airy, cool location (12 to 15 degrees Celsius) for about three weeks until stems break off easily from the tubers. Then, clean off the soil and small roots and dust tubers with a fungicide such as captan. For winter storage, place the tubers in vermiculite or peat moss and keep them at between seven and 15 degrees Celsius.

North says it's best to wait until after a frost before digging up gladioli. "This will give them as long a growing season as possible and maximize the corm size."

After digging, cut off the tops close to the corms and spread out in a box or flat to cure in a warm location for two weeks. "When the old corms separate easily from the new ones, it's time to clean them off, remove any soil or loose outer skin," she says.

Store the gladioli corms in open trays or paper bags at between five and 10 degrees Celsius. Before storing, dust with a bulb dust containing captan and malathion.

"Dahlias are different again. You want to store them for the shortest possible time as they often dry out in storage. Leave them in the ground for as long as possible and lift them out before the ground freezes," she advises.

Start by cutting back the plant to about 10 cm from the soil surface. Dig carefully to avoid breaking the roots and prevent damage to the neck where next year's buds start.

After lifting, turn upside down in a sunny location to drain water from the hollow stems.

Keep the bulbs at room temperature until the soil falls off the tubers. Dust with a fungicide and store in slightly moist peat moss or vermiculite. "They need to be in a cool location, between two and seven degrees. Higher temperatures will encourage sprouting," says North.

She also advises checking the tubers throughout the winter. If they are dry, sprinkle lightly with water.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

Try fall seeding for earlier veggie crop

If you're someone whose garden doesn't seem to grow fast enough in the spring, try fall seeding your vegetables.

"Fall seeding is definitely a way for vegetable gardeners who want an earlier crop to get a head start on the growing season," says Pam North, a horticulturist at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton. "For example, lettuce can be ready by late June, carrots in early July and onions and garlic mature three weeks earlier than if seeded in the spring."

Not all vegetables are suitable for fall seeding she cautions. Cool season crops are the best choices. These include onions, carrots, parsnips, spinach, lettuce and garlic.

Con t on page 4

Timing is also critical to fall seeding. "If the seed is planted too early, it will take up water and be killed when the water freezes, so you want to seed just before the ground freezes and into dry soil. That's usually in late October or early November," North says.

North says a light soil with lots of organic matter works best when fall seeding. "A heavy clay soil will form a crust which may prevent seedlings from germinating in the spring."

She also advises choosing a spot in the garden that won't be in the way of spring activity. The area should be sheltered, so wind can't blow seeds and soil away.

The same kind of soil preparation goes into fall seeding as when planting a garden in the spring. The soil must be worked and large lumps broken up to make a fine seedbed, then levelled.

Seeding itself is also the same as in the spring, with one exception. "Sow the seed at the same depth as you normally would in the spring, but sow more thickly because often about 10 per cent of the seeds don't germinate."

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

Alberta Agriculture appointments

New irrigation branch head

Larry Spiess is the new head of Alberta Agriculture's irrigation branch. Spiess has 25 years experience with the department's irrigation branch, starting as an irrigation specialist in Brooks in 1966. As acting branch head since April, Spiess has already had first-hand experience with his duties. "These are most challenging times for the branch. So many critical issues are coming to the fore—soil and water conservation concerns and irrigation efficiency, the potential for and challenges of diversification in irrigated agriculture, the limitations of irrigation expansion and public debate on irrigation developments," he says, adding, "Perhaps the biggest challenge will be helping the public understand how irrigation is tied into the whole fabric of life in southern Alberta. It's for much more than crop production. Irrigation canals and reservoirs provide water for domestic, municipal and industrial users, for recreation, and even for significant commercial fishing." As branch head he will be responsible for providing leadership in planning, implementing, co-ordinating and evaluating province-wide irrigation management, development and rehabilitation programs. He will also provide irrigated agriculture's input on a wide range of complex soil and water issues including long-range planning, irrigation feasibility and river basin planning. Most recently Spiess spent the last three years as research, planning and monitoring section head in the branch. He was also irrigation systems specialist in Lethbridge for 16 years and was involved in applied research in a variety of on-farm irrigation systems. Originally from southwestern Saskatchewan, Spiess holds a BSc in agricultural engineering from the University of Saskatchewan and a MSc in the same discipline from Montana State University. Spiess can be contacted in Lethbridge at 381-5140.

DHE moves south to Fahler

Leona Skulmoski is the new Alberta Agriculture district home economist in Fahler. Her new location is her second stop in the Alberta Peace region. She started work for the department two years ago in Fort Vermilion. "I will miss Fort Vermilion," she says, "but I also look forward to meeting and working with the people of Fahler and district." As district home economist, Skulmoski provides information to farm families and organizes courses and activities in a variety of subject areas. Those subjects range through farm management to clothing and textiles. She will also work closely with local 4-H clubs and other rural organizations, as well as promote Alberta Made food products. Skulmoski joined the department from a position as an assistant district home economist in Manitoba. She is a 1989 graduate of the University of Manitoba's bachelor of human ecology program. Skulmoski grew up on a grain farm in northwestern Manitoba near Pine River. She can be contacted in Fahler at 837-2211.

New faces at planning secretariat and internal audit

Alberta Agriculture's planning secretariat has a new member. Gibson Hanna, head of the business analysis branch for the last 14 years, has been appointed to the secretariat. The secretariat is responsible for strategic planning, policy development, policy analysis and program evaluation in Alberta Agriculture. "Mr. Hanna brings a valuable food processing and business perspective to the planning and policy development activities of the secretariat," says Doug Radke, assistant deputy minister of planning and development. Hanna holds a bachelor of commerce degree from the University of Calgary and a MBA from the University of Saskatchewan. He can be reached in Edmonton at 427-2417.

There is another change at the business analysis branch. Gerry Steinley will be transferring to the department's internal audit section. Internal audit performs independent review of the activities and operations of the department. Steinley, a 10-year veteran of the department with over 20 years experience in the banking industry, will join internal audit on October 1. On a transitional basis, he will continue to provide assistance to the community services branch evaluating grants and grant submissions. He can be reached in Edmonton at 427-5374.

Agri-News briefs

New soil testing video at district libraries

Producers can get tips on getting the most from soil testing in a new video now available from Alberta Agriculture district video libraries. "Get the Most out of Soil Test Results" (Agdex 533-1) is a co-venture of Alberta Agriculture, Esso, Sheritt and Norwest Labs. The 26-minute presentation explains the how-to of interpreting both results and recommendations of soil tests with live-action and interview segments. Featured in the video are Jim Robertson, University of Alberta soil scientist; Doug Penney, Alberta Agriculture soil specialist; and, Terry Roberts, of the Potash and Phosphate Institute of Canada. The video is also available for loan from the Alberta Agriculture Film Library. For more information, write it at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Westerra offers agricultural continuing ed courses

Producers west of Edmonton can now take advantage of a number of continuing education agriculture courses offered at the NAIT Westerra campus in Stony Plain. This is the second year the campus has offered these types courses. Among the topics are: planning agricultural construction; arc welding and flame cutting; basic equine management; cattle hoof trimming; feeds and nutrition for your horse; horse hoof trimming; ration balancing; understanding nutrients; water well and septic system troubleshooting; operating principles and maintenance procedures for equipment hydraulic systems; and, operating principles and maintenance procedures for the diesel engine. Courses are offered either as one evening weekly for four weeks or on weekends. More information is available in the fall/winter continuing education calendar. For a copy of the calendar and further information, call 963-1005.

Cattle commission funds six research projects

The Alberta Cattle Commission has allocated over $200,000 to six research projects. The six projects are diverse, covering a range of production and food handling topics. They include: developing packaging to extend the shelf life of fresh meat; improving beef tenderness; growth efficiency through immunization; shrinkage and dark cutting in slaughter cattle; and, identifying current electronic identification equipment. "To remain competitive in domestic and global markets, Alberta cattle producers must be at the leading edge of developing and implementing new technology. This means an increasingly active role in R&D by using producer funds to influence and direct research activities by complementing and enhancing current research and initiating new research as required," says Elgar Grinde, chairman of the commission's

Con't on page 6

research committee and a Holden area producer. For more information, contact Grinde in Holden at 688-2123, John Stewart-Smith in Calgary at 291-9771 or Marjorie Mann in Calgary at 275-4400.

PAMI compares conveyors and damage when handling pulses

Investment in a special low-damage conveyor can quickly be recouped by pulse producers who want to maximize their profits by minimizing handling damage. The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) compared four types of conveyors used on the Prairies, and says producers may want to consider the low damage characteristics of belt, paddle or bristle conveyors as an alternative to steel flighted augers. Physical damage from augers can range up to three per cent per pass and account for nearly 95 per cent of the conveyor's yearly operating cost. PAMI's other tips for reducing handling damages to pulse crops are: harvest and store pulses as close as possible to saleable dry moisture content; run conveyor inlets completely full; keep the drop height, from the outlet, as low as possible or use a bean ladder; and, handle pulses as little as possible. PAMI recently concluded a project studying pulse crop handling equipment. For more information on the project, call 1-800-567-PAMI and ask for GLEANINGS #660.

International pumpkin weigh-off in Smoky Lake Oct.14

Alberta pumpkin growers can see how their pumpkins stack up against the world October 14 in Smoky Lake. Smoky Lake is an official weigh-in site for the World Pumpkin Confederation's (WPC) annual contest. Along with the heaviest pumpkin, growers can compete in WPC sanctioned heaviest squash and watermelon contests. As part of the Smoky Lake activities growers can also enter heaviest potato, garlic and cabbage contests. Special activites during the day also have a pumpkin theme, including pumpking carving, painting, seed spitting, weight guessing and best looking competitions. There's also a prize for the competitor from the farthest distance, as well as a local poultry show. Larry Lafleur, president of the Smoky Lake Pumpkin Growers Association, says he expects the contest to be more provincial in scope this year, based on the number of calls he and other association members have received. For more information contact Lafleur at 656-3539, Barry Court at 656-3508, Russ Braham at 656-4230 or Barry Wood at 636-2183.

AGRI-NEWS

September 30, 1991

OCT 29 1991

Drought assistance measures for northeastern Alberta announced

Application forms for assistance with dugouts are now available at Alberta Agriculture district offices as part of a plan to help northeastern Alberta farmers affected by drought conditions in their region.

Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley and Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan announced a three-part initiative in response to drought conditions in northeastern Alberta.

For the period January 1, 1991, to December 31, 1991, the Alberta Dugout Water Pumping Program's rental rates will be set at 25 per cent of regular rates and half of the eligible costs of hauling water will be rebated.

The Alberta Dugout Water Pumping Program rents pumping equipment to fill farm dugouts that haven't been fed by run-off or precipitation. Through this initiative, northeastern farmers will pay $25 per day to rent the first pump and $13 per day for each additional pump. The rental fee for the first mile of pipe will be $50 daily and $25 per day for each additional mile of pipe. As well, under the water hauling initiative, farmers will be eligible for $1.50 for every 1,000 gallon-loaded mile for the first five miles, plus $1.10 for each additional mile. The maximum grant for hauling distances of five miles or less is $2,000; for hauling distances in excess of five miles, the maximum is $3,000.

Farmers living in the following areas will be eligible for program benefits: County of Thorhild, County of Beaver, County of Athabasca, County of Smoky Lake, County of St. Paul, County of Two Hills, County of Vermilion River, County of Minburn, County of Lamont, Municipal District of Wainwright, Municipal District of Bonnyville, Municipal District of Westlock and Improvement District 18 South.

The ministers are also recommending the federal government extend the northeastern region its tax deferral allowances for drought-induced sale of breeding stock. They are also asking that these benefits apply to producers who typically over-winter their calves for sale next year, but who are forced to sell now because of the lack of feed and water.

As well, the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation (AHCIC) will give priority to northeastern claims. Due to an earlier harvest, it's expected that claims can be processed speedily. Producers who haven't submitted their post-harvest reports are urged to do so immediately. AHCIC has also announced it will deduct only forage insurance premiums from forage insurance payments. Crop insurance premiums will be deducted later.

"Producers who have been adjusted or had claims processed already should receive payments by the end of September," says McClellan. "As well, discussions are underway to determine the amount and timing of interim revenue insurance payments. We will make interim payments as quickly as possible for the benefit of all revenue insurance contract holders."

"The purpose of these measures is to address those items that are not covered by existing insurance-type programs. We are working to get crop insurance payments out quickly and urging farmers to submit their NISA applications as soon as they arrive so that they can benefit from this program as well," notes Isley.

Contact: Ken Moholitny, Central Program Support, 422-9167
Brian West, Engineering Branch, 340-7606

This Week

Drought assistance measures for northeastern Alberta announced	1
Isley leads trade mission to Soviet Union and Europe	2
Cash advance crop combinations require consideration	3
Straw an asset on your fields	3
High tech and animal welfare symposium focus	4
Four additions to 4-H scholarship program	5
Symposium to explore alternative production options	5
1991 Queen Mother scholarship recipients	6

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Isley leads trade mission to Soviet Union and Europe

Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley is currently on a two-week trade mission to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR), Ukraine, Switzerland and England.

The trade mission marks the fourth annual Alberta-RSFSR consultations on agriculture. Isley will continue on to Ukraine to further establish official discussions between the Ukrainian government and Alberta Agriculture. The trip will conclude with meetings in Geneva and London to reinforce Alberta's interest in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations and support Alberta's market development interests.

Under a protocol agreement signed by Alberta and the Russian Republic in 1986, annual meetings are held to discuss areas of mutual co-operation in agriculture. One of the highlights to date of the unique Alberta-RSFSR co-operative project has been the successful Ross Alta joint venture in livestock genetics established by Alta Genetics Inc. of Calgary.

Agriteam Canada Ltd.'s Interagro farm-to-retail joint venture near Moscow will also be discussed during the visit, as well as the Alberta Wheat Pool's interest in crop development projects in the RSFSR. Representatives from each of the three Alberta companies will join the minister's trade delegation.

The third annual Alberta-RSFSR consultations were held in Edmonton in May 1990 when the republic's agriculture minister, Anatoly Ustjuzanin, led a delegation to Alberta. Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan followed up Ustjuzanin's visit with a trade mission to the Soviet Union in July 1990.

During his mission to Russia, Isley will formally meet with his counterpart, as well as facilitate meetings between private business interests and RSFSR officials. Meetings at various project sites and with government officials to discuss the emerging private sector in the Soviet Union and the Russian Republic will be included in the itinerary. As the largest and most influential republic, the RSFSR represents as much as 70 per cent of the Soviet Union's land area and natural resources.

"I anticipate that this year's consultations will surpass the already impressive gains achieved thus far under the Alberta-RSFSR protocol agreement," Isley said. "Alberta has worked with the Russian Republic for some time, with excellent results, in an effort to develop business relationships between Alberta companies and Russia.

"In light of recent, progressive change in the Soviet Union, combined with the policies of glasnost and perestroika, the potential for long-term trade opportunities between Alberta and the Soviet Union is excellent."

Isley's visit to Ukraine marks the first official mission by an Alberta agriculture minister. He will investigate opportunities for Alberta exports and business opportunities and begin a dialogue with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture. A meeting will also be held with representatives of the region of Lvov in western Ukraine who recently visited Alberta to promote Alberta investment and business ventures in Ukraine.

"Our mission represents Alberta's attempt to assist Ukraine improve on its already vast agricultural potential," noted Isley. "As the Bread Basket of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's reputation as a strong agricultural area is well known and offers a potentially strong market for Alberta's agricultural exports and services."

Also joining the Alberta delegation to Ukraine will be representatives of the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre of Grant MacEwan College who will follow up on their successful farmer training exchange program in Ukraine. Ukrainian Centre representatives will also investigate the development of an agriculture curricula in Ukraine.

From Ukraine, Isley will continue to Geneva, Switzerland, to meet with representatives of key delegations and reinforce Alberta's interest in the GATT negotiations. He will also meet with Canada's representatives and GATT officials to discuss the nation's agriculture trade policy strategies as these most important negotiations reach the final, critical stages.

The minister will also travel to London, England, where he will meet with representatives of the Canadian High Commission to discuss Alberta's market development interests in the United Kingdom and Europe.

Isley will also be meeting with representatives of England's farming community to discuss the agriculture industry and the reform proposals currently being debated in Europe, and to assist Alberta's already successful livestock marketing efforts in the United Kingdom. Isley left Alberta on September 22 and will return on October 7.

Contact: *Bob Prather, Trade Director, Europe, 427-4241*
Brad Klak, Executive Assistant to the Minister, 427-2137
Doug Blair, Alta Genetics, 239-8882
Bob Francis, Agriteam, 253-5298
Dr. Roman Petryshyn, Ukrainian Resource & Development Centre, Grant MacEwan College, 483-4340
Art Froehlich, Alberta Wheat Pool, 290-5534

Cash advance crop combinations require consideration

Producers who plan on taking out cash advances need to examine their options thoroughly before making an application because of changes to one program's limit says an Alberta Agriculture farm management economist.

"Especially if producers plan on taking out an advance of more than $50,000, and if they plan to apply for advances from grains and oilseeds other than wheat and barley, they need to look at their best strategy," says Craig Edwards.

Cash advances are available from two different sources. The Prairie Grain Advance Payment Act is for stored wheat and barley. The act is administered by the Canadian Wheat Board through their authorized elevator agents. As in the 1990-91 crop year, advances can be made to $250,000 and the first $50,000 is interest-free until quotas allow delivery. Approximately $1.63 per bushel will be advanced on wheat and 98 cents per bushel on barley. Details are available from local elevator agents.

Cash advances for canola, flax, rye and oats are available through the Advance Payment for Crops Act. This act is administered by the Prairie Canola Growers Council and isn't available at all elevators. For 1991, this program's maximum advance has been lowered to an interest-free $50,000 limit. Approximate prices per bushel are $2.50 for canola, $1.95 for flax, 76 cents for rye and 56 cents for oats.

A maximum interest-free cash advance of $50,000 is available to producers from one or both of the acts. "Because the programs have different maximum advances but, the interest-free portion is the same $50,000, what crop you choose for your advance, and the order you make your application can make a real difference to your total eligibility.

"A producer who requires a cash advance of more than $50,000 and needs to use canola, flax, rye or oats to provide security, should take an advance on those crops first, before either wheat or barley," he advises.

For example, take a producer who needs approximately a $70,000 advance. If 50,000 bushels of stored barley is used as security, the producer would receive $49,000 (50,000 X 98 cents per bushel).

While the producer still needs $20,000, and has 10,000 bushels of stored flax for security, only $1,000 of eligibility remains. "Because cash advances on flax are limited to only the interest-free $50,000 total, the producer won't be able to receive the total advance needed," explains Edwards. "The better choice would have been to apply for the advance on the flax first."

In that case, the producer would have received $19,500 for the stored flax (10,000 bushels times $1.95 per acre.) Then could have applied for a cash advance on the barley for $49,000, making the total advance $68,500. The $50,000 interest-free limit would have been reached with $19,500 from the flax and $30,500 of the barley covered. The producer would pay interest on the remaining $18,500 of the advance.

Edwards says producers should examine their marketing and financial plan very carefully before applying for a cash advance, and consult with their local elevator agent for all the details. "Deciding on the strategy with the most advantages should take into consideration the time element of the interest free loans for the different grains and oilseeds."

Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

Straw an asset on your fields

If you make your land bare with a match or a blade, you're both dollars and productivity poorer says an Alberta Agriculture soils specialist.

"Probably every farmer has heard a conservationist or an agrologist say that straw, or any crop residue, is valuable," says Grant Gillund, northeast regional soils specialist. "That value can be measured in a number of ways from fertilizer costs to production losses."

While fewer farmers are burning-off stubble, Gillund notes that practice puts a lot of dollars up in smoke. For example, a 45 bushel per acre wheat crop produces about 4,500 pounds of straw per acre. That straw contains about 25 pounds of nitrogen per acre, and half to three-quarters of that valuable nutrient is lost when straw burns. "At 20 cents per pound, that means up to $4 of nitrogen goes up in smoke from each acre of straw burned. It's not a practice you'd want to brag about to your bank manager."

Even in a year where crops are poorer and straw is light, it's still important to keep the stubble up he adds. Straw's biggest value is its ability to reduce erosion and conserve moisture. That value comes when straw is retained on the soil surface.

"Straw is priceless in stopping wind erosion. Only a soil with surface residues is protected. If it's burned off or tilled under, it can't do the job," says Gillund. "A bare soil can start to lift in just a 30 kilometre per hour wind. In one afternoon you can lose what it took nature 10,000 years to build."

Surface residue can be retained by direct seeding or conservation tillage. Gillund points to Agriculture Canada studies in the northeast that have shown zero tillage is as good or better than conventional tillage when comparing crop yields. He also points out direct seeding cuts out about 20 per cent of input costs, saving producers about $20 per acre in fuel and machinery costs. "This savings will pay the cost of chemicals in most years," he adds.

Some of the major effects of stubble burning are long term, and much more difficult to put a dollar value on he adds. If stubble is burned regularly, the soil organic matter declines.

Cont'd on page 4

With the loss of organic matter comes decreased productivity. Estimates in the U.S. indicate a loss of 30 per cent of soil productivity since that country was settled.

"No major studies have been done in Alberta about this specific productivity loss, but those losses are apparently similar. Near Derwent I know of a field that was originally broken about 50 years ago, plus had some new breaking ajacent to it. The field was sown to oats and all of the field received identical treatment with the same fertilizer and herbicide. The new breaking yielded 70 bushels to the acre, and the old cultivation only ran 55 bushels," Gillund says.

The 27 per cent difference in productivity is worth $10.50 per acre he adds. "Burning stubble or black summerfallow doesn't cause that loss in a single year, but over the years it can signficantly reduce what you put in your pocket and limit your long term productivity."

Contact: Grant Gillund
853-8109

High tech and animal welfare symposium focus

Lively and fruitful discussions are hoped for by the organizers of a two day symposium on high technology and animal welfare.

With the retreat setting of Kananaskis Village as its background, the symposium on November 14 and 15 has been structured to maximize the exchange of ideas says Jerome Martin of the University of Alberta's faculty of extension.

Leading off will be three keynote presentations, followed by four specialists in the areas of high technology and poultry, dairy, pork and beef production. The keynote speakers are Tarjei Tennessen, Bernard Rollin and Keith Salmon.

Tennessen, a professor at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, will discuss how animals cope with high tech husbandry. Rollin, who taught the first veterinary medical ethics course in the world, will look at animal welfare, animal rights and agriculture. A professor at Colorado State University, Rollin, is a principal architect of U.S. legislation dealing with the welfare of experimental animals. University of Alberta's Keith Salmon will examine the mythological and historical aspects of the human-animal relationship.

Production experts will discuss: development of the Canadian industries; current state of disease control; housing and ventilation; feeding programs; and, selection criteria for genetic improvements.

The keynote presentations and production expert speakers will provide food for thought for the second day's activities. Participants will break into four commodity group workshops to further discuss reactions to the speakers, concerns and directions for the future. Their discussions will be reported to the whole symposium for further examination. The symposium will end with a wrap-presentation by keynote speaker Rollin.

The symposium program was developed by a committee that included several livestock commodity groups notes Martin, and the original idea for a symposium came from the Alberta SPCA.

He says interest in the symposium reflects a concern within the industry about animal welfare, as well as how the public perceives producers do their jobs.

Martin says organizers hope to have a good attendance at the symposium, particularly because of the unique opportunities it offers. "The retreat aspect should contribute to a better exchange between all the participants and stakeholders. There will be time to more talking before, between and after the official sessions."

Among those who might be interested in the symposium are: livestock industry professionals; livestock producers; agricultural students and teachers; livestock building and equipment designers, manufacturers and distributors; and, consumers.

Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis with fees going up $25 after October 28. Before then, registration is $175. Symposium brochures have been mailed to a number of prospective participants, and are also available from the faculty of extension by calling Sheila or Rebecca at 492-3029.

Registration can be done over the telephone by calling Sheila at 492-3029. Registration forms can also be FAXed to 492-0627 or mailed to Agriculture & Forestry Programs, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7.

Contact: Jerome Martin, 492-3029
Sheila Greenberg, 492-3029
Elizabeth Gredley, 471-2020

Four additions to 4-H scholarship program

Four new scholarships are available this fall to past or present Alberta 4-H club members through the provincial 4-H scholarship program.

Two of those scholarships are from the Alberta Salers Association says Alain Joly, scholarship program co-ordinator. The $500 scholarships will go to present and past 4-H club members who have demonstrated involvement in community and volunteer activities. Open to students in any program of study, and in any year of study, the scholarships are tenable at any post secondary institution.

The $200 Minburn Wild Rose Scholarship was created with monies from the disbanded Wild Rose 4-H Light Horse Club by the Minburn District 4-H Council. Joly notes eligibility criteria include being member of the district for more than five years, along with leadership skills and 4-H and community involvement.

The 25-year old Vermilion River 4-H District Council has added sponsoring a scholarship to its many activities for local 4-H members. With funds from donations, the council has set up a $200 scholarship in its name to recognize the extra effort of 4-H members who help at the district level, or who represent the district at the regional level. To be eligible, applicants must have been an active member of the district for at least three years, especially at the district and regional level. Emphasis will be placed on 4-H involvement. Mature students are eligible, but the scholarship can only be won once.

The four new scholarships boost the total number of available scholarships to 87, providing nearly $59,000 to post secondary students.

For more information on the Alberta 4-H Scholarship Program, contact the nearest regional 4-H office, or the 4-H branch in Edmonton at 422-4444.

Contact: *Arron Madson* *422-4444*
Alain Joly *422-4444*

Symposium to explore alternative production options

Anyone who has mulled over the possibilities of an alternative agricultural enterprise after examining the declining returns from traditional grain farming might be interested in a symposium coming to Grande Prairie November 6 through 8.

A futurist, Reuben Nelson, will open the "Alternatives in agriculture" symposium. "We wanted to start by making people think out of their regular way of thinking," says Susan Meyer, Grande Prairie district home economist and one of the organizing committee members.

But the real emphasis of the symposium is on farmers exploring a number of agricultural production alternatives Speakers will lend their expertise to lead sessions covering organic farming, wild rice production, country vacations, alternative livestock, sod and forage seed production, fruit production, food processing, Christmas trees and ornamentals, greenhouses and an agriculture research update

"Speakers were chosen for their expertise in a particular area—and, all of them are Alberta or Peace country based—but their role is leading the discussion, as the symposium format is geared for participant involvement and discussion," says Brenda Hart, the symposium co-ordinator.

Paul Laflamme, Grande Prairie district agriculturist, says the district office receives many questions about alternatives to traditional agricultural production. "This symposium could give direction to farmers who want to change."

To conclude the symposium, designated participants will report on their particular sessions. Plus, Noel McNaughton, the syposium's own roving reporter, will give participants an overall view of the proceedings. His comments will be part of a package participants will receive after the conference.

The registration fee is quite reasonable notes Hart, at $25 for the conference and an additional $15 for the Thursday evening banquet.

Brochures with syposium details and registration information are now available at Alberta Agriculture district offices in the Peace, northwest and northeast regions. While promotion has been limited to this area, other producers are welcome says Hart. She can be contacted in Grande Prairie at 538-5285 for more information.

The "Alternatives in agriculture" symposium is sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada, the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Agreement, the Saskatoon Mountain Economic Development Authority and the Saskatoon Lake Agricultural Society.

Contact: *Brenda Hart* *538-5285*
Susan Meyer *538-5285*
Paul Laflamme *538-5285*

1991 Queen Mother scholarship recipients

Three Alberta students studying veterinary medicine are the 1991 recipients of the Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Scholarship.

Marian Johnson of Scandia, Stephanie Koole of Lacombe, and Tanya Salt of Cardston will each receive $1,500 awards in recognition of their academic achievements, leadership abilities and contributions to their communities.

Johnson, 22, is in her fourth year of study at the University of Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM). Johnson was raised on a farm and was an active 4-H member for six years. While attending the University of Saskatchewan, she has been involved with several organizations including the American Association of Equine Practitioners, the Canadian Veterinary Students' Association and WCVM intramurals. Her aspirations include working for a large or mixed animal practice specializing in herd health and production medicine.

Koole, 18, is also attending the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, but in her first year of pre-veterinary medicine.

A 4-H member for the past six years, Koole was also very active in school activities. An accomplished public speaker, she has won several awards. Her involvement in community activities include carolling and participating in a volunteer pet therapy program. Koole also enjoys dancing and has competed in several contests.

Salt, 18, is in her first year of agriculture at the University of Alberta, studying pre-veterinary medicine. A nine year 4-H member of the Cardston Chinook Beef Club, Salt's interests include band and swimming. She has also been involved with the Rural Education Development Association (REDA) and received the Comfort Award following participating in REDA's Internship Program. Salt's community volunteer work included parades, church activities and the Alberta Special Olympics.

The Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Scholarship was established in 1985, as a gift to the Queen Mother from the Alberta government when she attended the World Angus Forum in Edmonton. The scholarship recognizes and assists deserving young Albertans in their first, second, third or fourth year of study in the fields of agriculture, agricultural engineering, home economics or veterinary medicine (large animal).

This scholarship is sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, administered by the department's 4-H branch and given out in the name of Her Majesty, the Queen Mother.

Contact: Alain Joly
422-4444

AGRI-NEWS

October 7, 1991

Revenue protection doesn't eliminate need for effective marketing

The dollars earned from an effective grain and oilseed marketing program are still important, even if a producer is participating in the revenue protection plan says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

The revenue protection plan (RPP) is one component of the Gross Revenue Insurance Program (GRIP) in Alberta. The other is crop insurance. RPP was designed to provide grain and oilseed farmers with a target revenue during years of low production and or prices.

"What producers mustn't overlook is that RPP doesn't provide a guaranteed price or income, it's an insurance program. Marketing decisions are just as important as they've ever been," says Charlie Pearson.

"Farmers who produce a higher than program base grade quality crop, or who market their crops at above average prices will achieve higher actual revenues than their target revenue through the program. Poor marketing can result in actual revenues falling below those target revenues.

"As well," he adds, "making effective marketing decisions will also make a big difference to a producer's cash flow, so producers must understand the program's implications on both marketing decisions and cash flow."

Determining actual total revenue and cash flow takes four steps says Pearson. First, calculate target revenue by multiplying the Prairie average support price and the individual farmer's average crop insurance yield.

Step two is calculating deemed revenue, or whether the crop qualifies for a RPP payment. Deemed revenue is based on actual farm yields times that year's Prairie average price for the base grade. If there's a revenue shortfall between the producer's target revenue and deemed revenue, then the producer would receive a deficiency payment.

In the third step, producers calculate their total returns. This means adding actual returns from grain and oilseed sales plus any program payments. Finally, comes analysis of cash flow implications. This includes when the crop can be delivered and when interim and final revenue protection program payments are expected.

Producers also have to be aware that the provincial government can make up to three interim payments under RPP by the spring of 1992. These interim payments can make up to 75 per cent of the forecast total payment. "It's expected the payments will be 35 per cent this fall and another 40 per cent by next spring," he says. The final 25 per cent will come after final payments are known for Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) grains and a month or two after the end of the crop year for non-board crops.

"If you run through the steps you can see that if you don't aggressively go after an above average price, you could be left with less than the program's target revenue," says Pearson.

For example, a farmer yields 22 bushels per acre—equal to the individual's crop insurance yield—on a 100 acre canola field. As well, the canola grades number one. By using the Prairie average support price of $6.56 per bushel the farmer's target revenue is set at $14,432. However the Prairie average selling price for that year was $6 per bushel, so the deemed

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Revenue protection doesn't eliminate need for effective marketing	1
Consider marketing alternatives when selling crops	2
Special crops market outlooks mixed	2
Model Legislature will debate conservation issues	3
Producers will tell how conservation works at provincial workshop	3
Shedding light on the "light" label	4
Fall care required in yard and garden	4
Briefs	6

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

revenue is only $13,200. This makes the farmer eligible for a $1,232 RPP payment. But, if the farmer sold his 2,200 bushel crop at $5.50 per bushel, the actual market revenue would be $12,100. When the RPP payment of $1,232 is included, the famer's total canola returns would be $13,332.

"This example farmer misses out on at least $1,100 by not marketing his crop well," notes Pearson. "That total would certainly improve any profits, especially now when every dollar counts while the grain market is poor."

Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

Consider marketing alternatives when selling crops

While grain and oilseed markets are far from strong, producers can still make a difference in their returns by pursuing sound marketing strategies says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Producers need to look at what markets to sell into and when to sell," says Charlie Pearson. "Those factors can make a difference, along with lessening the risky strategies."

As with the past few years, the local market and the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) will provide the most advantageous pricing options for barley he says. "The best strategy is to sell a portion of your barley each quarter to the best priced marketing alternative. The strategy with the least advantages—unless you can forecast a drought next year—is to hold barley until next June or July, and then try to dump it.

"If there is a drought next spring or summer," he adds, "The futures market provides a much better mechanism for taking advantage of price rallies, than price speculating on farm stored barley."

Relevant decision prices for this fall are $68 per tonne for CWB total payments, or $75 per tonne if you load a producer car, and $90 per tonne for barley in southern Alberta Pearson says.

Producers selling canola should also set a target price for their marketing decisions he says. "Breakeven calculations should be a major factor in establishing this target. When your local price achieves this target, farm managers should be prepared to price a portion of their crop."

Writing down the logic behind your marketing decisions and then regularly reviewing those decisions will help sharpen marketing skills he notes. "Pricing your canola in the top one-third of market prices has more to do with admitting when a bad decision was made, than patting yourself on the back when you were lucky enough to have happened to call the market right."

Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

Special crops market outlooks mixed

Alberta producers with special crops to market can be more optimistic about their prices than for most traditional crops, but still face some low prices says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Firm and strengthening markets for some special commodities should provide producers with relatively good returns," say Al Dooley. "For other commodities, such as dry beans and forage seeds, the market is a little less encouraging."

Cash lentil prices remained firm through September despite the large crop harvested in Canada he says. "Tight holding by farmers appears to be lending support to what on the surface appears to be a negative market. However, the upside price potential over the next month or two at least is limited." Lentil prices were about 15 cents per pound through September, very similar to prices in August.

The feed pea market strengthened somewhat through September. "A number of factors were at work—farmer reluctance to sell at the $3.50 level, firmed soymeal futures and a much smaller pea and bean crop in Europe. This points to higher prices, but large Canadian and Australian pea crops will work prices the other direction," Dooley says.

A reasonable price range to expect is between $3.75 and $4.25 per bushel for feed peas over most of the current crop year he adds.

While Alberta's dry bean crop looks good, price prospects are poor. With the harvest more than 80 per cent complete, yields were averaging about one tonne per acre and quality was reported as excellent he says. The American bean crop is also expected to be a good one, with yields up almost 10 per cent. "Prices are weak. Pintos, for example, were trading well below $16 (U.S.) per hundredweight. These are the poorest price levels in a number of years," Dooley says.

"Small reds may be an exception, with some potential for remaining at relatively attractive price levels, but it's still too early to know if those values can be maintained," he adds.

Dooley says he also expects export volumes of alfalfa cubes to rebound this year. After several years of steady growth Canadian cube sales to Japan fell sharply, down 35 per cent, last year. Poor quality was cited as the reason for the decline. "Most forecasts are optimistic cubed alfalfa exports will go up, although prices for both cubes and pellets are significantly lower now than they were a year ago at this time," he says. Canadian pellet exports to Japan are comparatively stable and Dooley says prices may firm up by late fall or early winter.

The alfalfa seed market tumbled through mid-September. "A combination of good crops in a number of U.S. states, a reasonably large crop expected in Canada, carryover from the 1990-91 crop year and reports of large crops in France and Italy all are weighing heavily on prices," says Dooley. "The

Cont'd on page 3

price outlook isn't encouraging right now. A key question for the future is whether or not these lower prices will remove large seed supplies from the system over the course of the crop year.

"Strategies for marketing alfalfa seed will all carry a fair amount of risk given the poor information available on the industry. At current values, selling more than a small portion of new crop, or from carryover, may be unwise unless you have a cash flow concern or need.

"However, regardless of what prices do during 1991-92, selling a portion of your crop every month or two will at least guarantee a near average price for the year," he says.

Contact: Al Dooley
427-5387

Model Legislature will debate conservation issues

Soil conservation will be front and centre in a debate at the Alberta Legislature October 25 and 26, but the participants will be high school students and not MLAs.

The Alberta Legislature is hosting senior high students from across the province at a model Legislature designed to sharpen speaking and debating skills of the participants. The Alberta Debate and Speech Association has organized this type of learning activity since 1974. The simulation features the government side presenting legislation, the opposition scrutinizing it and questions and answers going back and forth across the floor.

"We're extremely pleased that soil and water conservation issues have been chosen as the subject of debate for this year's model Legislature," says Barb Shackel, Alberta Agriculture conservation awareness specialist. "All the participants, no matter what side of the debate they are on, will learn a great deal about very critical issues in Alberta's future."

The three motions to be discussed involve moratoriums on: non-agricultural development of class one to three agricultural land; the cultivation of fragile agricultural land; and, native prairie, and drainage, cultivation and or development of permanent and semi-permanent wetlands

Each of the participating students receives a package of information reviewing the resolutions and the rules of order for the model Legislature in registration confirmation packages Participants will also be briefed before the activities start.

Other sponsors of the model Legislature are the Canada-Alberta Soil Conservation Initiative, Soil Conservation Canada, the Alberta chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), the Alberta North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Centre, the Office of the Speaker, Nova Corporation and the Eugene L. Brody Memorial fund.

For more information, please contact the Alberta Debate and Speech Association in Edmonton at 484-7929 or FAX 484-2710.

Contact: Barb Shackel
422-4385

Producers will tell how conservation works at provincial workshop

Ten producers representing five different soil zones will tell a provincial workshop how they are making conservation work on their farms.

"Through discussion of their systems and the techniques they use, they will share their conservation success stories and truly portray the workshop theme of the many ways to make conservation work," says workshop co-ordinator Peter Gamache. The third annual soil conservation workshop is slated for Edmonton next January 13 through 15.

"Soil conservation is the foundation of integrated natural resource management, and there are many resources available and ways to make conservation work," says Gamache.

The conservation farmer speakers are one example of how the workshop will explore those resources and farming practices he adds. "Soil conservationists from across the province representing a wide range of interests have found the previous workshops to be a good forum to share conservation ideas, techniques, issues and concerns. We hope to maintain that wide scope with the 1992 line-up," he says.

Concurrent sessions will include equipment modification to enhance conservation, range management, integrating wildlife and soil conservation, pasture management and reports on current research projects. Group sessions will include a look at problem weed control in reduced tillage, the long term effects of crop rotations and working with the media.

The Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) will continue as a major sponsor of the workshop and hold its 14th annual meeting on January 14 during the workshop. Other major sponsors are the Canada-Alberta Soil Conservation Initiative (CASCI) and the Canada/Alberta Agreement on Soil, Water and Cropping Research and Technology Transfer (CARTT).

Gamache says early registration is important as the conference attracted over 400 people last year. Registration packages will be available at Alberta Agriculture district offices and from municipal fieldmen in early November.

Contact: Peter Gamache 422-4385 Russ Evans 936-5306

Shedding light on the "light" label

Reading the fine print is just as important in food labels as it is in contracts says Alberta Agriculture's provincial foods and nutrition specialist.

"Consumers are cutting back on high fat foods and are increasingly aware of nutritious eating habits. They are demanding 'light' foods, and grocery store shelves are full of products that proclaim their lightness. But, consumers shouldn't be so anxious in their quest for healthy foods that they don't take time to find out if what they're buying really has fewer calories, or less fat or sugar," says Aileen Whitmore.

An explosion into virtually every food and beverage category makes determining what light means difficult. Part of consumer confusion is because laws governing the way foods are marketed haven't kept up with the boom in light products she says. So, light or lite can mean a number of things.

"A light label doesn't necessarily mean the food has less fat or calories," explains Whitmore. "It can also be used to describe taste, texture, color, flavor, weight or alcohol content. In order to be sure what you're buying is a nutritionally light product, compare it with the regular product."

Foods labelled as light aren't the only ones that can mislead consumers. Claims about cholesterol can also be deceptive on product labels she adds. "Cholesterol only exists in animal fat. But, companies are unfortunately able to claim—and splash across their labels—products that never did contain cholesterol as cholesterol free.

"Cholesterol free doesn't mean fat free either," Whitmore adds, "and, fat is what is most important for many of us to eat less of."

Whitmore also recommends checking products with low-sugar labels for their serving size. Regulations allow a low-sugar label if there is no more than two grams, about half a teaspoon, of sugar per serving. "If the serving size is smaller than you'd normally eat, the product may not be the low sugar choice you wanted."

Dietetic is also a word to watch for she says. Some dietetic foods are made for people with allergies, others are low sodium or low fat. Dietetic doesn't always mean diabetic or lower in calories and or fat. "Again, read the label for the order of ingredients," Whitmore says.

Light-labelled products range from low-fat milks, cheeses and yoghurts to high fibre, whole grain cereals through to no-cholesterol cookies and baked goods. These products are a result of consumer demand. Two decades ago light foods were low in sugar, fat and total calories, labelled as dietetic and marketed in a single section of stores to people on restricted diets or with medical conditions.

In the interim, consumers searching for healthy eating choices have put manufacturing and retail focus on lighter food choices. Now most retailers merchandise light products beside regular products throughout the store, as well as in special sections.

"The heavy exposure given to these foods is evidence that retailers are recognizing the tremendous public demand for light products," Whitmore says.

Public demand has stimulated response from particular sectors of the agrifood industry. "The meat industry is one that has recognized the need for new and changed products. The result has been even leaner meats here in Canada."

Contact: Aileen Whitmore
427-2412

Fall care required in yard and garden

Clean-up, mulching and watering are three of the last steps in looking after gardens and lawns before winter's first snows says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"You can also look at fall work as the first step in preparing for a successful growing season next year. A little work this fall will ensure healthier plants next spring," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Centre in Brooks.

Fall clean-up should start with removing dead and dying plant material from the garden, perennial and flower beds. "Don't dig the refuse in, remove it as a disease prevention. Removing all of the top material from a perennial border helps to prevent overwintering diseases and insects. The debris material can be composted, provided it's disease-free.

"Although the debris can help hold a snow cover during the winter, it's a better idea to mulch with a clean material such as peat moss or wood chips. Spading, or turning over the soil between the plant crowns, also helps to trap snow," she says.

Digging over the garden and annual flower beds with a spade is also beneficial because it improves soil texture. Barkley says to dig to a full spade depth and leave the lumps. Frost action will break down the lumps over the winter. Then in the spring, simple forking will get the beds ready for planting.

Mulching is also important for the strawberry patch and roses. Strawberries should be mulched when the temperature drops to minus 7°C and stays there for three or four nights. Straw is excellent mulch, but she recommends sprinkling mouse bait around before applying the mulch to limit damage from mice. The same preventative procedure applies to preparing roses for the winter.

"Wintering tender and semi-tender—hybrid tea, graniflora and floribunda—roses is a two-step process," says Barkley, "and it should start in the summer by stopping fertilizer at the end of July and cutting stems of flowers shorter during August so new growth is reduced. Water should also be cut back during September."

Cont'd on page 5

Several hard frosts should occur before putting insulating materials in and around the roses. First, soak the plant roots well. Prune the roses 25 to 30 cm from the ground. This will also make mulching easier. Insulation can be dried grass clippings, peat moss, leaf litter or compost.

"Apply whatever you choose as an insulating material evenly in and around the rose crowns. Don't pack it too tightly and to finish, cover with a sheet of polyethylene to keep out excess moisture," she says. The insulating material can be removed in the spring once bulbs have started to swell. Then, prune the canes back to the third or fifth outside bud.

Barkley also recommends adding to the natural snow cover. "Shovel snow on the plant as another layer of insulation. This is especially important if the roses are in a southern exposure."

Moisture reserves in the root zone are important to all perennials, trees and shrubs including the lawn she adds.

"Providing water at this time of year will ensure that there is a reserve next spring for plants to draw from. Watering should be done in mid-October or just before the ground freezes, whichever comes first."

Barkley notes raspberries should also be watered well in the late fall after their leaves have dropped

Raking leaves shouldn't be ignored she notes. "Raking tidies the yard and removes overwintering sites for many insects and diseases."

Fall is also a good time to control lawn weeds. "Dandelions, chickweed and clover are susceptible to herbicides applied in the early fall. Pick a warm day for application and use a large water drop size," she says.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
362-3391

Agri-News briefs

Society for range management fall meeting in Red Deer Nov. 1-2

A number of range management topics will be featured at the annual fall meeting and grazing seminar of the Society for Range Management (international mountain section) in Red Deer November 1 and 2. "Range users and managers are invited to attend," says Bob Wroe. The program will open with anthropologist Grace Morgan from the University of Alberta discussing historical bison and native movements on the Great Plains from an ecological perspective. A morning business meeting and afternoon program are on the second day's agenda. Cattle and forestry in the B.C. Peace River region, grazing effects on plant diversity on the Eastern Slopes and development of a public access policy for the Castle River area in the southern Alberta foothills will be discussed in the afternoon sessions. A banquet and awards evening follows. The Society for Range Management fosters and promotes the study, management and rational use of range land ecosystems and resources. The society has approximately 5,000 members in 50 countries. For more information about the meeting, contact Bob Wroe in Lacombe at 782-4641.

October transitional month for fed cattle prices

October should be a transitional month from lower to higher fed cattle prices says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "But, with large supplies of beef and competing meats in the short run, the move to higher prices may turn out to be quite gradual," notes Ron Gietz. His projection is for steady price improvement through the fall based on a gradual tightening of fed cattle supplies in the U.S. "Fundamentals suggest one last run at prices in the upper $70 range in the U.S. is possible in late fall and early winter. Further ahead, the outlook becomes much less positive as increases in beef supplies are expected to outpace population growth," he says. Gietz also says a high Canada U.S. exchange rate has a direct negative impact on Canadian livestock prices. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at 427-5376.

Hog prices had typical fall drop during summer

The slaughter hog market finished its typical fall price drop in a few short weeks in late summer says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Now that prices are on a lower plane, further large declines aren't likely," says Ron Gietz. "Alberta prices are expected to rebound slightly before trading around $1.30/kg for most of the fall." Further seasonal declines are likely in December he adds. Gietz expects the drop to be to $1.25/kg and for that price to remain steady through January. The price nose-dive through late August and early September was fuelled by unexpectedly large increases in U.S. hog marketings. "The summer price decline in hog prices was about twice as large as the much publicized summer decline in the cattle market. In general, the volatility in pork production

Cont'd on page 6

and hog prices is significantly larger than in the slaughter cattle market." For more information, Gietz can be contacted in Edmonton at 427-5376.

Encouraging spiders for insect control

Squelch any arachnophobia that surfaces when you see large spiders hanging around the outside of your home and garage this fall, because orb-weaver spiders have benefits says an Alberta Agriculture diagnostician. In the fall before they die, female orb-weavers produce egg sacs containing hundreds of eggs. "These eggs make up part of an environmentally friendly approach to next year's insect problems," says Jim Calpas. "So, when you see orb-weavers around your home, you might want to encourage their presence and not discourage having them around." These spiders have poor vision and locate their prey by feeling vibration and tension of threads in their webs. For more information, contact Calpas in Brooks at 362-3391

Information meetings scheduled for proposed environmental regulations

Alberta Environment is holding a number of information meetings across the province to provide an overview of the content and intent of the proposed environmental regulations. Each meeting will have a series of sessions outlining each of the proposed regulations. The first meeting will be in Edmonton at the Chateau Louis conference centre October 16 and 17. Sessions run 8:30 to noon and 1:30 to 5 p.m. both days with an open house on the first day from 7 to 9 p.m. The second information meeting will be at the Stampeder Inn in Calgary October 24 and 25. Day long meetings will be held in Grande Prairie (Grande Prairie Inn) on October 29 and Lethbridge (Lethbridge Lodge) on November 5. At these locations, sessions run from 8:30 to noon with an open house from noon to 9 p.m. A number of the proposed regulations will be of interest to the agricultural community including disclosure of information, approvals, the Environmental Appeal Board, conservation and reclamation, potable water, waste control, and pesticide sales, handling, use and application. These sessions aren't for public input, but are designed as briefings for those seeking clarification about the information presented in the first draft of the regulations, and to help any member of the public or an interest group prepare a written submission. Written submissions are due by December 31, 1991. For more information about the meetings, to register, or for written submission guidelines, call 1-800-661-5586 toll-free.

Quilt garden displayed at Muttart

Edmonton's Muttart Conservatory will bloom from October 23 through November 22 with a special juried show of quilts. The show titled, "A Garden of Quilts", is sponsored by the Quilters Co-op and will feature antique and contemporary quilts with a floral theme. Members of the sponsoring group will be at the show during the weekends doing quilt lap work. For more information, contact Judy Villett at 429-6031.

Bankers association at farming, finance and your future

Farming, finance and your future is the theme of the 1991 Canadian agriculture finance conference November 3 through 6 in Calgary. The Canadian Bankers Association (CBA) conference will examine a variety of issues farmers, agribusiness, bankers and government policy makers will face in the future. Of particular interest are three sessions: mega trends in agriculture with Greg Clark, president of John Deere Ltd.; Canadian competitiveness with agricultural economics professor Larry Martin; and, learning from the past, planning for the future with Clay Gilson. Concurrent session topics include: government involvement in agriculture; building the family farm management team; agricultural banking and environmental risk; trends in consumer eating habits; and, technological innovation in agriculture. For more information, contact the CBA at (416)362-6092 in Toronto or (403)263-1454 in Calgary.

Conservation play now available on video

The popular "Planting in the Dust" one-person conservation play that has graced many Alberta stages is now available on video for loan from Alberta Agriculture's Film Library. Hailed as one of the finest presentations ever on land ethics and conservation, the play focuses on a young woman as she struggles with her deep rooted feeling for her family's land and for today's farming problems. "... the land belongs to itself, if anything we belong to it...We borrow our lives from it," she says. The hour presentation concludes with a small-group discussion. For lending information, write the Film Library at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

AGRI-NEWS

October 14, 1991

GRIP interim payment slated for November

Farmers who are eligible for a payment from the revenue protection component of the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) and who have submitted their production estimates will begin to receive interim payments as early as November says Alberta's associate agriculture minister.

"We are aware of the effects of the continuing downward slide of commodity prices and want to get a payment into farmers' hands as quickly as possible," says Shirley McClellan. "Revenue protection was developed with these kinds of situations in mind, and the payments will help farmers to meet their financial obligations."

The interim payment will be set at 35 per cent of the difference between the target revenue and the forecast market revenue for insured commodities. Where production has not yet been measured, payments will be calculated on the basis of production estimates. Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation (AHCIC) adjusters will measure production over the winter. Where applicable, the corporation will issue a further revenue protection payment before seeding starts next spring.

McClellan adds only the revenue insurance premium, not the full GRIP premium which includes the crop insurance premium, will be deducted from the interim payments. Although premiums are due by November 1, 1991, the AHCIC will waive all interest charges on premiums collected from the initial payment.

The crop insurance portion of GRIP indemnities will be paid in the normal manner, and farmers should expect these payments shortly.

"We urge producers to get their production estimates in as soon as possible in order to assure prompt payments," she advises.

Contact: *Glenn Gorrell*
General Manager
Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corp.
782-4661

Research plots show routes to restore soil productivity

Preliminary results from long term research sites across the province indicate there are no quick fixes for eroded topsoil, but do show there are ways to restore soil productivity.

"While the key is still to do as much as possible to minimize wind and water erosion, this research is answering questions about crop yield declines and how to recover those losses," say Elston Solberg, co-ordinator of agronomic research for Alberta Agriculture's soils branch.

Erosion was simulated by mechanically removing, or scalping, five, 10, 15 and 20 cm of topsoil. Topsoil was also left undisturbed as a check in some of the long term experimental sites started last year by Alberta Agriculture, the University of Alberta and Agriculture Canada.

Because the study also is looking beyond the effects of erosion and at recovering from topsoil loss, nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer, cattle manure and five cm of topsoil were also added to plots. "This allows us to evaluate whether soil productivity can be restored," Solberg says.

And, he adds, results from the first year of the long term project in central Alberta have shown all of the

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

GRIP interim payment slated for November	1
Research plots show routes to restore soil productivity	1
Reclaiming eroded knolls worth the effort	2
Slough consolidation could be your best option	3
Revised farm debt publication now available	4
1991 4-H scholarships awarded	4
Alberta Agriculture appointments	8
Briefs	9

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

amendments—fertilizer , manure and top soil—improved wheat yields on eroded soils. Fertilizer (112 lb./ac. of nitrogen and 34 lb./ac. of phosphorous) consistently increased yields 30 to 40 bu./ac., no matter what the depth of erosion or the soil type. Manure, applied at a rate of 34 tons per acre dry weight, markedly increased yields.

"The manure was especially beneficial on the more deeply eroded soils where it had a positive effect on soil tilth and seedbed quality," he says. Returning topsoil had the same effect he adds, restoring productivity as well as greatly improving soil tilth and seedbed quality on the highly eroded plots.

"While the yields did improve, the full production potential of the soil before it was eroded wasn't recovered. There's a message there for producers about preventing soil erosion, and for us as researchers looking for answers about soil amendments, their combinations and agronomic management," Solberg says.

At the two central Alberta sites, one in the Black soil zone near Josephburg and the other on Gray Wooded soil near Cooking Lake, top yields were recorded on fertilized plots with no topsoil removed. (See chart). The Josephburg site had a 77 bu./ac. yield and Cooking Lake's was slightly lower at 73 bu./ac.

"Our observations were what we expected: that soil erosion reduces yield and that erosion limits producer management options," Solberg says.

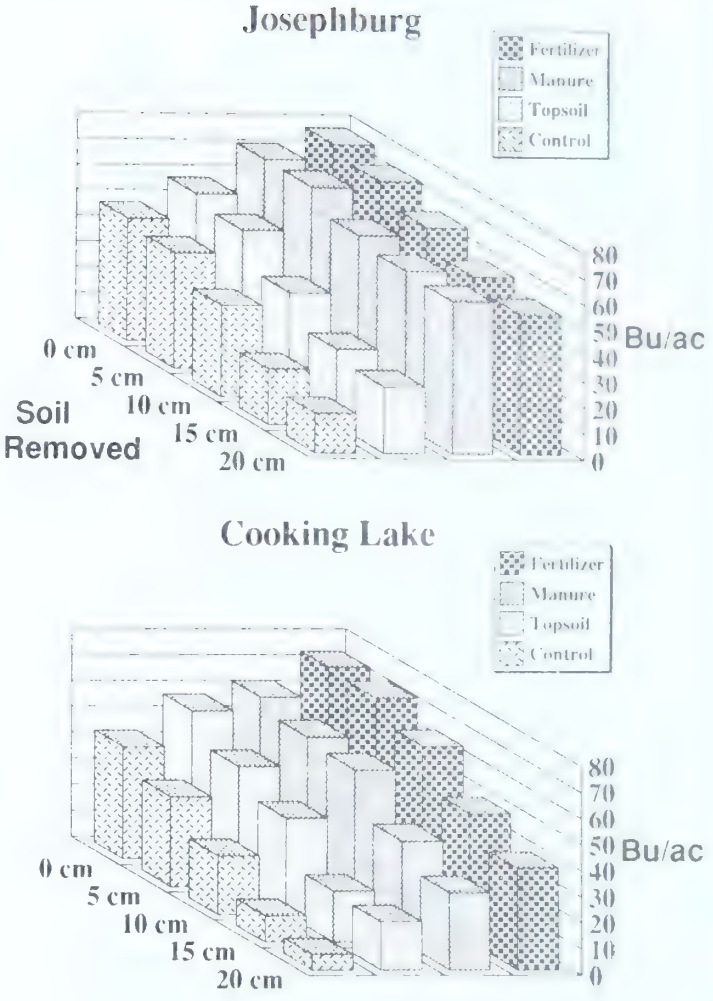
Marvin Nyborg, a University of Alberta co-operative researcher, says dramatic yield reductions were especially true at the Cooking Lake site, "since there is only 10 to 12 cm of rather cruddy topsoil to begin with". He adds, "The yield reduction at the Josephburg site was somewhat surprising since there's 25 to 30 cm of Alberta's best soil there." For example at the Josephburg site, fertilized plots with 20 cm of topsoil mechanically removed yielded almost 54 bu./ac., 23 bu./ac. less than the plot with no eroded topsoil.

That erosion greatly limits management options can't be overstated says his colleague Ceasar Izaurralde. "As topsoil is removed, tilth, water holding capacity, infiltration rate and seedbed quality are diminished. As a result, the soil becomes wetter, drier and harder much more quickly than the non-eroded soil, and management windows become narrower and more costly."

All of the research sites will be cropped to spring wheat for the duration of the experiment. Currently funds are in place for two years, but Solberg says they hope to continue the research well into the future.

The four other sites are on dryland and irrigated brown soils and are overseen by Agriculture Canada's Lethbridge research station. For more information about those sites, contact Frank Larney at 327-4561.

Contact: *Elston Solberg* *427-2530*
Marvin Nyborg *492-6557*
Ceasar Izaurralde *492-5104*



Reclaiming eroded knolls worth the effort

Eroded knolls that dot many fields across the province aren't likely to fix themselves, but can return to productivity with some reclamation work says an Alberta Agriculture soil fertility specialist.

"Fixing the problem may sound like extra trouble, but the bright side is that you should get a reasonable return on the time and money you invest from increased productivity, as well as the satisfaction of leaving land more productive than it is today," says Ross McKenzie of the soils branch in Lethbridge.

What the farmer must do is restore productivity through adding a combination of phosphorous fertilizer and manure he says. In many cases water, and to a lesser extent wind, erosion has striped away organic matter rich in top soil from hill tops, and exposed dense compact subsoil.

"This soil generally has a poor structure and is hard to work into a good seedbed. Water can't infiltrate it well and its water holding capacity is limited. Air exchange also may be

Cont'd on page3

restricted, and this soil has a tendency to crust. All of these factors decrease soil productivity on an eroded knoll and increase its susceptibility to drought," he explains.

As well, the erosion will have limited the available nutrients and changed the surface chemical properties he says. "Loss of organic matter greatly reduces soil fertility. Erosion can bring high lime nearer the surface, increasing the pH and reducing the availability of phosphorous. The higher alkaline pH will increase volatilization losses from urea or anhydrous ammonia applications."

To start correcting the problem, McKenzie advises taking a soil sample of the knolls in a field. Phosphorous levels will likely be very low. He suggests trying an application of 75 to 100 lbs./ac. of P_2O_5, or roughly 150 to 200 lbs of mono-ammonium phosphate (11-55-0 or 11-51-0). Banding at a depth of three to four inches is recommended.

"Fall application will make it easier to hit just the knolls, but don't leave the fertilizer on the surface, or it will be gone in the spring runoff," he says.

Once phosphorous levels are adequate, he says to watch the knolls for nitrogen deficiencies. "Soil test knolls separately from the rest of the field. If the soil test indicates that nitrogen levels are lower than the rest of the field, give them an extra shot of nitrogen."

Adding manure will also improve both nutrient deficiencies and tilth problems in the eroded area.

"A third, and a very critical, part of reclaiming your knolls, is preventing future erosion. Increased yields from the phosphorous and manure will help by providing more stubble. But, you must leave the stubble standing to protect the soil from further erosion," he says. As well, straw should be left on the knolls.

Another option to consider is a standard conservation technique of reducing or eliminating tillage operations, especially, McKenzie says, fall disking. Switching from the disk to cultivator for fall operations is another alternative.

For more information about improving productivity on eroded knolls, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office, regional soils specialist, the soils branch or the conservation and development branch.

Contact: Dr. Ross McKenzie
381-5126

Slough consolidation could be your best option

Surface water in depressions, potholes and sloughs can be very frustrating for farmers. Maneuvering machinery around potholes is awkward and time consuming. If depressions remain too wet too long, then cropping and haying operations have to be delayed. And uncultivated wetlands are often a major source of weed problems.

At first glance, drainage seems to be the answer to these headaches. "But, slough consolidation offers many advantages over drainage—advantages that could mean more cash in the farmer's pocket," says Shaukat Ali of Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch. "Consolidation reduces the frustration caused by trying to farm around depressions, it brings fertile bottom lands into crop production and it keeps valuable water resources on the farm."

In slough consolidation, more correctly described as water consolidation, the water from many depressions is brought together into one or two large ponds or dugouts, says Ali, a project engineer with the farm water management section. Although slough consolidation is especially popular in areas with low precipitation, it can be also beneficial where spring water is overly abundant.

By consolidating water from many small ponds, the farmer creates a more secure water supply. When precipitation is low, the reservoir can be an essential source of water for domestic use, stock watering and supplemental irrigation, as well as habitat for local wildlife. Keeping water on the farm also reduces downstream flooding and soil erosion that can result from uncontrolled drainage.

After water consolidation field operations are more timely because the farmer no longer has to wait for the low lying areas to dry out. And with fewer obstacles, operations become more efficient, saving time and money. As well, slough consolidation reduces the number of weed sources, allowing the farmer to cut herbicide costs.

Jim Babe, a farmer in the County of Forty Mile, knows about the benefits of slough consolidation. A project on three quarter sections of his rolling farmland brought more than 10 additional acres into production as well as providing water for livestock.

"I consolidated the water from my potholes and sloughs into a large holding pond and a dugout so the water can be put to better use. In fact, I now have the option of grazing cattle because I have a secure supply for stock watering." He also says the project has minimized his weed problems and it seems to be helping control salinity that had started to appear around some of his potholes.

"I'm very happy with the results of my slough consolidation project," adds Babe. "I'd recommend others to seriously consider on-farm water management rather than drainage."

Slough consolidation requires a well thought-out plan based on the amount of available water, the type of operation (crop or livestock) and the needs of the farm including domestic use. Usually a field survey and at least some design work are needed to determine the consolidation method to best meet the landowner's needs. The landowner may also have to comply with Alberta Environment's legal licensing requirements as set out in the Water Resources Act, particularly if the project involves off-farm drainage of excess water.

Cont'd on page 4

"I would advise the landowner to consult with an Alberta Agriculture farm water management specialist to discuss the different options available," says Ali.

"For interested farmers," he adds, "slough consolidation projects can be designed to accommodate non-agricultural uses as well. For example, some farmers are working with Ducks Unlimited on cost-shared projects which include preservation of wetlands and surrounding habitat."

For more information about slough consolidation and other forms of farm water management, contact Ali in Edmonton at 422-6530.

Contact: Shaukat Ali
422-6530

Revised farm debt publication now available

Farmers have a newly revised aid to help them understand the array of legal implications connected to farm debt.

"Farm debt - the legal implications including the new Personal Property Act of Alberta" (Agdex 817-12) is now available at Alberta Agriculture district offices and from the department's Publications Office.

"The revised publication is designed to advise farmers of their legal rights and obligations when they face debt problems," says Paul Gervais of the farm business management branch in Olds. Colin Simmons, a lawyer who specializes in farm law, wrote the original edition and also revised this edition notes Gervais.

"Topics discussed in the 40-page book are wide ranging and related to the various aspects of debt," says Gervais. These topics include: the Farm Debt Review Board, mortgages, general security agreements, guarantees, quit claims, foreclosure and repossession, section 178 of the Bank Act, tax implications of debt settlement and the Bankruptcy Act.

"An addition to this revised edition is information about the new Alberta Personal Property Security Act which became law in the fall of 1990," he adds. The act applies to many transactions that give creditors security in personal property for the purpose of securing payment or performance of a debt or obligation.

"The publication explains the new act, registration procedures, ranking creditor claims by creditors and the impact of the new act on farm businesses," Gervais says.

For a copy of the publication contact your nearest Alberta Agriculture district office, or write the Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Contact: Paul Gervais
556-4240

1991 4-H scholarships awarded

Eighty-six past and present 4-H members have been awarded scholarships for the l991-92 academic year.

Post-secondary students from throughout the province benefited from over $58,000 offered in scholarships this year says Alain Joly, scholarship co-ordinator. "Over 300 applications were received by the 4-H branch, and each one was considered based on 4-H and community involvement, leadership skills, school activities, academic standing and other criteria set by scholarship donors."

In 1991, seven new scholarships were added to the program. They are: the Alberta Salers Association Scholarship of $500, the A & E Cappelle LN Herefords Scholarship of $300, the $250 Blue Klein Memorial, two scholarships of $200 offered by the Minburn and Vermilion River 4-H District Councils respectively, the Don Matthews scholarship of $200 and the $100 Glen Bodell Memorial Scholarship.

Individuals, corporations, associations, the Alberta government and memorial funds sponsor the wide variety of 4-H scholarships available to former and current members.

For more information about the 4-H scholarship program in Alberta, or for information about starting a 4-H scholarship, contact Alberta Agriculture's 4-H branch at Room 200, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6, or call (403)422-4444.

Contact: Alain Joly
422-4444

Editor's Note: *A complete list of winners follows.*

1991 4-H Scholarship Recipients

SCHOLARSHIP		RECIPIENT	
Alberta Dairymen's Association & Alberta	$1000 each $ 500 each	Ginger Langan Christoph Weder Keith Gabert Timothy Goodbrand Sandi Krucik	Beaverlodge Camrose Agriculture Manning Youngstown Elk Point
Alberta Ford & Mercury Dealer Scholarship	$1000 each	Dianne Unrau Laura James Christopher Solick Neil Stringer Stacey Sellers Lori Andrews Darlene Malcolm	Taber Okotoks Lacombe Sunnynook Innisfree Barrhead Hines Creek
Alberta Salers Association	$ 500 each	Molly Davie Sandra Hodgson	Drayton Valley Bowden
Alberta Treasury Branches	$1000 each	Lydia Nagai Lorena Reinhardt Erin Branson Carmen Knowles Allan Crawford Trevor Nonay Brandy DeSmet	Taber Rockyford Markerville Byemoor Irma Legal Spirit River
Alberta Wheat Pool (1st Year)	$ 500 each (2nd Year)	Karyn Copland Stacey Bouw Cheryl Whipple Douglas Brown	Lacombe Bow Island Pincher Creek Byemoor
Alpha Milk Company	$ 500 each	Sharon Crawford Corinne Stevens Hendrik Wildeboer	Irma Olds Lacombe
A & E Cappelle LN Herefords	$ 300	Kimberley Roberts	Onoway
Bale Bandits	$1000	Carla Bonde	Rocky Mtn. House
Blue Klein Memorial Canadian National Exhibition	$ 250 $1000	Robyn Pipke Christine Erichsen	Bashaw Botha

Ceres International Women's Fraternity	$ 100	Carla Anderson	Taber
Dixon Shield Memorial	$ 475	Melody Ulmer	Barrhead
Don Matthews	$ 200	D. Hueppelsheuser	Blackfalds
Edith Taylor Memorial	$ 400	Laura Pimm	Grimshaw
Farm Credit Corporation	$ 300 each	Kimberly Lindeman	Milk River
		J. Maclean-Companion	High River
		Emery Klein	Delburne
		Angela Bishell	Veteran
		Shelly Snyder	Lamont
		Sandra Bahrynowski	Wildwood
		Margo Stewart	Grimshaw
Farmhouse International Fraternity	$ 100	Leonard Hendricks	Strathmore
Glen Bodell Memorial	$ 100	Lee Harryett	Ardrossan
4-H Foundation of Alberta	$ 475	Jennifer Babiuk	Brosseau
Hoechst Canada Bursary	$ 500	Sheila Thompson	Milk River
Inga Marr Memorial	$ 300	Elan Properzi	Barrhead
Ken Edgerton Memorial	$ 400	Barbara Gabert	Manning
Lilydale Co-operative	$ 800	Bonnie Lyzenga	Rosemary
Marilyn Sue Lloyd Memorial	$ 100	Kristy Smith	Endiang
Minburn Wild Rose	$ 200	Marvin Zagrosh	Mundare
Norma Jean Gray	$1000 each	Amanda Bennett	Wanham
		Sheila Clark	St. Albert
		Jackie Coleman	Heath
		Jeff Hammond	Pincher Creek
		Holly Watson	Sangudo
Pennington Memorial	$1345.21 each	Angel Roberts	Barrhead
		Deneen Stoby	Gunn
Petro-Canada 4-H Youth	$1000	Deanna Brown	Tofield

Leadership Award	each	Bree Claude	Bonnyville
		Annette Polanski	Thorhild
		Barbara Szybunka	Sangudo
Stanley Shulhan Memorial	$ 290	Kellie Pederson	Barrhead
Thomas Caryk Memorial	$ 800	Bergit Baker	Hythe
TX Bar (1)	$1000	Diane DeKoning	Fort Macleod
TX Bar (2)	$ 500	David Jans	Medicine Hat
TX Bar (3)	$ 400	Sheree McGlynn	Pincher Creek
United Farmers of Alberta	$ 500 each	Mary Gaugler	Hoselaw
		Ella Wright	Didsbury
United Grain Growers	$ 500	Colleen Schmidt	Vulcan
Vermilion River 4-H District	$ 200	Sara Chamberlain	Tulliby Lake
Wetaskiwin District 4-H Scholarship	$ 950 each	Nora Jenson	Tees
		Leanne McFadden	Bluffton
		Jeffrey Wedman	Wetaskiwin
Wheat Board Surplus Monies Trust	$ 600 each	Doug Logan	Lomond
		Brian King	Olds
		Tanya Stobbe	Millet
		Jacqui Fawcett	Consort
		Catherine McGrath	Vermilion
		Sherry Pfannmuller	Mayerthorpe
		Carla Luiken	Fairview
Woodgrove Unifarm Local Scholarship	$ 600	Martin Staub	Millet

Alberta Agriculture appointments

Fort Vermilion has new DHE

Sharon Stollery is Alberta Agriculture's newest district home economist. Stollery, a spring BSc. in home economics graduate from the University of Alberta, will be based in Fort Vermilion. "As I'm new to the area, I'm not only eager to learn more about the district, but also about the needs of rural families in the area," she says. As district home economist Stollery provides information to farm families and organizes courses and activities in a variety of subject areas. Those subjects range through farm management to clothing and textiles. She will also promote Alberta Made food products as well as work closely with rural organizations including 4-H clubs. She brings her own six years of experience with 4-H to her new job. Stollery is originally from the Camrose area and was raised on a mixed grain and beef farm. She can be reached in Fort Vermilion at 927-3712.

Industrial development section has new development officer

Ron Popek has joined Alberta Agriculture's agri-food and processing branch as a senior development officer in the industrial development section. "Ron's expertise and experience in project analysis, business management, finance and wide exposure to the agri-food processing industry will be of significant benefit to the industrial development section's clients," says Lou Normand, head of the agri-food and processing development branch. This section promotes the growth of value-added food processing and provides information and assistance to companies considering investment and major expansions. "I'm looking forward to assisting the private sector in further expanding Alberta's food industry," says Popek. He has spent the last 12 years with the department's business analysis branch. As senior analyst he was primarily responsible for evaluations and inspections of Canada/Alberta Subsidiary Agreement on Agricultural Processing and Marketing projects, as well as management support activities with agri-food companies and organizations. Popek, a business graduate of the University of Alberta, can be reached in Edmonton at 427-7325.

New district agriculturist in Fort Saskatchewan

Trevor Yurchak is the new district agriculturist in Fort Saskatchewan. Yurchak is familiar with the scope of his new duties as well as the area. He spent the last 10 months at the Athabasca district office and is originally from north of Lamont. "I anticipate that my previous experience in the district as an ammonia truck driver last fall, will make my job that much easier," he says. "Although my formal experience isn't extensive, my farming background and ambition should make me a very dynamic D.A. for this district," he adds. As district agriculturist he will provide information and educational programs to producers, farm organizations and agribusinesses. Yurchak's first experience with the department came as a summer assistant in Lamont in 1988, followed by a similar job in Vegreville in 1990. He graduated from the University of Alberta last year with a BSc. in agriculture. Yurchak can be reached in Fort Saskatchewan at 998-0190.

Agri-News briefs

Alive and well on the farm peace conference Nov. 14-15

Peace region farm women will focus on the many challenges farm families face today in staying "alive and well on the farm". Keynote speaker Gordon Colledge will speak on that theme to open the annual conference by telling participants how they can stay "alive and well" through good relationships, communications and planning. Two of the unique select-a-sessions feature panel discussions. One panel is former city women who became farm wives discussing whether farmers are born or made, and in the other panel farm women will share their experiences in taking over the farm operation after the death or disability of their farm and life partner. The conference will close on the theme of "celebrate yourself" with Gaynor Dawson. For more information and registration brochures, contact any Peace region Alberta Agriculture district home economist.

Lakeland College launches crop homestudy program

For the first time an Alberta college is offering a full certificate program in crop production through distance education. Lakeland College will launch the new part-time, study-at-home program on November 4. Courses focus on crop production practices and the application of scientific and economic principles to the management of crop production. All are equivalent to those offered through regular, on-campus classes, but have been rewritten to a correspondence-based format, supplemented by telephone tutoring, projects, videos and on-campus work. Students will have up to seven years to complete the program but could reasonably expect to finish it in as little as four years. The course has a mature student provision. Students can study at their own pace, but definite time frames for course completion have been set to help students stay motivated. The first course, soil science, runs from November 4 through January 18. Weed control and fertilizers will be offered in the next term, and field crops next year. The program is modelled after one introduced at the University of Saskatchewan last year. The course will be delivered through continuing education at the Vermilion campus. Course and registration information is available by calling (403)853-4444, or any regional centre of Lakeland College. For more information about this program, contact Robert Brad in Vermilion at 853-8438.

Open houses/workshops on water resource management in 16 Alberta centres

Open houses and workshops on the future management of Alberta's water resources will be held in 16 centres this fall Beginning on October 30, the meetings are part of a public consultation process reviewing the province's water management policies and legislation. Based on the input received at the open houses and workshops, draft legislation will be prepared for public review in 1992. This series of open houses and workshops will be based on a discussion paper released this summer. "Water Management in Alberta: Challenges for the Future" examined five key water management challenges facing Alberta. A dozen background papers are also available on topics such as water rights, water resource planning, groundwater and water conservation. Open houses and workshops are scheduled as follows: Vermilion, Oct. 30; Red Deer, Nov. 1; Lac La Biche, Nov. 7; Fort McMurray, Nov. 8; Hanna, Nov. 14; Medicine Hat, Nov. 15: Lethbridge, Nov. 20; Claresholm, Nov. 21; Calgary, Nov. 22 and 23; Whitecourt, Nov. 26; Drayton Valley, Nov. 27; Edmonton, Nov. 29 and 30; High Level, Dec.3; Grande Prairie, Dec.4; High Prairie, Dec.5; and, Peace River, Dec.6. The Alberta Water Commission, the Environment Council of Alberta and Alberta Environment are partners presenting the open houses and workshops. On weekdays, open houses start at 2:30 p.m. and workshops at 7 p.m. On Saturdays, open houses start at 10 a.m. with workshops at 1 p.m. For more information and for persons planning to attend, call 1-800-661-5586 toll-free. More information is also available from Bob Hill, Alberta Environment communications division at 427-6267.

AGRI-NEWS

October 21, 1991

Generally good weather yielded generally good crops

This year's growing season was generally a good one that yielded Alberta producers average to above average crops say two Alberta Agriculture specialists.

"The 1991 season was good to most Alberta farmers, although conditions were drier than normal in some regions of the province," says Peter Dzikowski weather resource specialist with the conservation and development branch.

Alberta's harvest was virtually complete by the first week of October. Warm, dry weather in August and September provided good conditions for harvesting operations. Peace region farmers were slightly behind the rest of the province as early September rains delayed their harvesting progress.

"For most farmers, yields and crops were average to above average. The exception was the northeast region where yields are estimated to be as low as 50 per cent of average," says Diane Ostrowski, crop statistician. "North central and northwest regions reported yields significantly above average, as did some portions of the southern regions."

Spring hopes were high with a wet beginning to the crop season across the province. Heavy rains during May and June brought rainfall totals up to 200 per cent above normal. But, associated cool temperatures slowed the growth of annual crops.

"After a cool, wet May and June farmers needed warm dry conditions to speed up crop growth and to harvest hay. However, the warm and dry conditions stretched through July and into August. Crops deteriorated later in the season, especially in northeastern Alberta," Dzikowski says.

"Unfortunately the prolonged hot, dry weather reduced pasture and crop growth and caused problems with water supply shortages in the northeast," he adds.

Precipitation totals averaged for the province were close to normal for the crop season. The provincial average for May 1 through to September 30 was 308.0 mm, 25.1 mm above the normal provincial average. This total is based on the precipitation recorded at 45 Alberta weather stations.

Seasonal precipitation totals varied from a low of 166.9 mm at Elk Point, 53 per cent of its normal, to a high of 470.6 mm at Red Deer, 147 per cent of its long term normal. Cold Lake's 173.8 mm was the second driest total in the province. Vegreville was also dry, reporting 202.9 mm of rain.

The provincial average temperature for the same five month period was 14.2 °C, 0.8 degrees warmer than normal. "August's exceptionally warm temperatures, about three degrees above normal on average, helped contribute to this difference. And that warm weather provided excellent harvesting conditions for farmers with good crops," Dzikowski says.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski* *422-4385* *Diane Ostrowski* *427-4011*

This Week

Generally good weather yielded generally good crops	*1*
Alberta interests reinforced by European trade mission	*2*
Computers on Wheels rolling for seventh season	*2*
New "college connection" to Computers on Wheels	*3*
Slow cooking key to tender juicy lean beef	*4*
Finding the tillage balance	*4*
New grading system in spotlight at oat conference	*5*
NISA information sessions scheduled across the province	*5*
Briefs	*6*

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Alberta interests reinforced by European trade mission

A recent trade mission reinforced Alberta's interests at a time of rapid social, political and economic change in the Soviet Union.

Alberta's Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley recently led a 14 person delegation to Russia and Ukraine. In Russia, the mission participated in the fourth annual consultations related to the Alberta/Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic Co-operation Agreement. The five-year agreement was signed in 1986.

The delegation included representatives from the Alberta Wheat Pool, Alta Genetics and Agriteam Canada. The group visited several state and collective farms, a meat processing plant and a horse breeding centre.

"I was impressed with the land and its agricultural potential," says Isley. "The Russian people's desire to improve their situation and fully utilize their vast agricultural resources can definitely be furthered by gaining the knowledge and expertise Alberta companies can provide. The linkages these activities will create will establish long-term mutually beneficial business relationships."

A protocol was drafted outlining respective actions and follow-ups for the next year. Isley also invited his counterpart to visit Alberta in 1992.

While in Ukraine, Isley met with the Ukrainian agriculture minister. The purpose of the mission was to initiate discussions about future business opportunities for Alberta companies and agencies. To that end, and with the input and support of the other members of the Alberta delegation, Isley negotiated and signed a five year memorandum of agreement on scientific, technical and economic co-operation in agriculture between Alberta and Ukraine. Future trade efforts will identify those opportunities and follow up on the agreement. A Ukrainian delegation was also invited to visit Alberta in 1992.

The final leg of the mission was to Geneva and London. In Geneva Isley reiterated the Alberta government's objectives on agricultural trade reform in the GATT negotiations to a number of officials. They included the Canadian and U.S. ambassadors to GATT, the deputy director general of GATT, the deputy permanent representative of Australia and various representatives of the Cairns Group.

Isley emphasized the critical need for strong discipline on the magnitude and rules related to export subsidies, particularly in the grain and oilseed sector. "The insane EC-U.S. subsidy war has caused a disastrous situation for Canadian grain producers in particular," he says. Countries such as Canada, Argentina and Australia aren't in a position to compete with American and EC treasuries he adds. "The significant reduction of trade distorting domestic subsidies and border protection of all types is critical to the reform process if this round of trade negotiations is to be deemed successful."

Achieving the level of reform Canada and other GATT members aimed for at the start of the Uruguay Round may not be possible he says, and phased-in reform may be necessary. "However," he says, "unless the magnitude of reform is strong enough to impact the market and the decision making of producers, and unless we see a commitment to further negotiations for continued reform, producers and governments will lose faith in the GATT system."

On the whole, the minister says he was impressed with the upbeat mood of negotiators in terms of reaching a positive conclusion.

In Britain Isley met with the Canadian High Commission, the British undersecretary for European and external relations and his officials, and Alberta's agent general. Isley heard the British perspective on the reform of the EC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Contact: *Bob Prather*, *Trade director, Europe*, *427-4241*; *Brad Klak*, *Executive assistant to the minister*, *427-2137*

Computers on Wheels rolling for seventh season

Computers on Wheels vans are rolling on Alberta roads for the seventh season of taking computer awareness to Alberta farmers.

"Computers on Wheels is highly successful in meeting its mandate of delivering computer awareness courses to rural Albertans in the agricultural industry. Course evaluations from last year indicate 99.6 per cent of participants felt they benefited from the program," says Gary Spurrell, Computers on Wheels co-ordinator.

The mobile service of Alberta Agriculture has five vans based at agricultural colleges around the province. The vans can take instructors, equipment and course material to any location in Alberta. Four diverse courses are offered for the 1991-92 season. The courses range from three introductory courses—computers for farm use, computerized financial records, and spreadsheets and databases for farm use—to computerized farm financial planning worksheets.

"Extensive enhancements have been made to all the courses," notes Spurrell. The computers for farm use course will switch from application specific software to Microsoft Works. The introduction to computerized financial records has been rewritten to correspond to the manual bookkeeping course taught by Alberta Agriculture district staff. A new topic in the course is GST transactions. Lotus 1-2-3 and Reflex the Analyst will continue to be part of the spreadsheet and database course.

The computerized farm financial planning worksheet course is offered to past and current participants in Alberta Agriculture's Gear Up Advantage program.

Cont'd on page 3

The tuition fee for all Computers on Wheels courses is $80 This represents 53 per cent of actual costs with the balance picked up by the program's sponsors.

Over half of last year's 108 courses were the introduction to computers for farm use Spurrell says. "This indicates a strong demand for awareness level courses and a definite need to continue the Computers on Wheels program."

To date over 580 courses have been presented to approximately 5,000 producers. "Our goal for this season is to supply the demand by delivering 110 courses to an approximate capacity of 1,100 students who want to learn more about computers and their application to business in agriculture," Spurrell says.

All the courses are taught on IBM compatible computers and feature qualified instruction and individual hands-on experience. The classes are small with a maximum of ten students.

"Some people have the mistaken impression that classes are held in the vans," says Spurrell, "but they are actually in an appropriate classroom setting as arranged through the local district office."

While all the courses do use specific software packages, the concepts learned by participants are transferable to the same type of other software programs he says.

The Computers on Wheels courses open the door to farmers learning more about specific applications they may be interested in he adds. "They can look to the private sector for that specific training, or another option is a computer connection course offered by one of the province's agricultural colleges." (Editor's note: See accompanying article)

Computers on Wheels was originally a three year project with partners Alberta Agriculture, IBM Canada and the University of Alberta. Co-operating partners in this year's program are Alberta Agriculture, the Canada-Alberta Farm Management Initiative program, the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) and Alberta Wheat Pool, as well as Fairview, Lakeland, Olds and Lethbridge Community colleges.

For more information about Computers on Wheels, the Computer Connection program and the availability of courses in your area, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office.

Contact: Gary Spurrell
556-4287

New "college connection" to Computers on Wheels

Farmers can connect with a new series of courses at agricultural colleges to continue their computer education.

Fairview College, Lakeland College, Olds College and Lethbridge Community College are part of the Computer Connection program, an extension of Alberta Agriculture's Computers on Wheels program.

Computers on Wheels provides four introductory level courses says Gary Spurrell, the program's co-ordinator. The four computer connection courses build on the awareness level of the Computers on Wheels courses he adds. "Computers on Wheels introduces you to the potential of the computer, and it's a good base for the college connection courses."

In fact, Computers on Wheels courses are recommended prerequisites for Computer Connection program courses. The four courses are: computerized farm accounting, level one and two; agricultural spreadsheet applications; and, computerized farm production records.

The first level of computerized farm accounting is a comprehensive introduction to double entry accounting. As well as learning about the software package, students are given a thorough background in accounting principles to use in their computer bookkeeping. The level two course teaches accrual accounting principles, and by the end of the course students should be able to prepare meaningful financial reports for their farms.

By the end of agricultural spreadsheet applications, students will have developed several working templates for decision making situations on their farms.

The objective of computerized farm production records is providing a thorough working knowledge of database software and applying databases in maintaining and analyzing farm production records. Students will also have the opportunity to design applications for their farms.

Each course includes 30 hours of instruction and hands-on work with a computer. Courses are five days in length, but delivery will be flexible to accommodate the needs of different areas. Scheduling will be in co-operation with Alberta Agriculture district offices and the colleges.

The tuition fee cost is offset by the Canada-Alberta Farm Management Initiative program. Individuals pay only $175 of the actual $495 cost of each course.

For more information contact the continuing education office at Fairview College, Lakeland College, Olds College or Lethbridge Community College, or your local Alberta Agriculture district office.

Contact: Gary Spurrell
556-4287

Al Motley
Lakeland College, Vermilion
853-8566

Brad Smith
Lethbridge
Community College
329-7295

Linda Parker
Olds College
556-4642

Jerry Danyluk
Fairview College
835-6628

Slow cooking key to tender, juicy lean beef

Alberta is beef country, so it only follows that Alberta cooks know how to prepare the world renowned product. Not so, says an Alberta Agriculture district home economist who researched how retail handling and consumer preparation affected meat quality.

People are still surprised to learn that they should be cooking the new leaner Alberta beef at lower temperatures says the Hanna-based Laura Lee Billings. "How beef is cooked affects its tenderness and that becomes especially important with the new leaner beef the industry produces."

Even though this new leaner beef is high quality and better nutritionally, consumers somehow don't have that idea she says. A survey a few years ago by the Beef Information Centre found one in three Canadians believed beef quality had declined. For Billings, who knew differently, the survey was the impetus to find the reason for beef's undeserved reputation. She suspected the real problem was in the way beef was handled between the farm gate and the consumer's table. How the meat was cooked was one obvious reason for the rap lean red meat had as too tough, not as tender, nor as flavorful as meat with more marbling.

"A simple explanation is that cooking practices haven't changed to accommodate the changes in leanness," she says. "The new leaner Alberta beef should be cooked slowly at lower temperatures. Unfortunately, many people still cook beef at 350°F and end up with tough, dry meat and then think beef quality has declined."

Now the recommendation is to cook beef at between 275 and 325°F, depending on the particular cut. Roasts, for example, should be cooked in a 275°F oven. "Cooking time will be longer and you may have to plan ahead a little more, but you'll certainly be able to taste the improvement in eating quality," says Billings.

Another factor, aging, also affects beef tenderness. Aging enhances tenderness as natural enzymes in the meat slowly break down muscle fibres and connective tissues. The general recommendation is for 10 to 14 days of carcass aging. Agriculture Canada researcher Stephen Morgan Jones says the meat on retail shelves doesn't always get that aging time. "Quite a considerable portion of the meat is not aged for the full 10 days," says the Lacombe based scientist.

So, unaged and inadequately aged beef can also contribute to consumer perceptions about variable and declining beef quality says Billings.

Two years ago Billings did a demonstration research project through the Farming for the Future program. Over 270 city, town and farm families participated. They evaluated four different beef cuts—T-bone, rib, sirloin and chuck steak—that had been aged for either three or 14 days. They were also given instructions on how to prepare the meat at lower temperatures.

Participants preferred the beef that had been aged longer, and also learned about better preparation she says. "A lot of the people bought only hamburger because they didn't know how to cook beef—especially the less tender cuts—for the best results." Eighty two per cent of the demonstration participants said they would continue to use the slower, lower cooking temperatures she adds.

For more information about cooking beef, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district home economist.

Contact: Laura Lee Billings
854-5500

Finding the tillage balance

A farmer determining how much tillage faces the same tough question as a parent deciding on disciplining a teenager: where is the balance between too much and too little?

"From a soil conservation viewpoint," says Grant Gillund, regional soils specialist based in Vermilion, "tillage is the farming practice that causes soil degradation. The act of tillage aerates the soil and increases the rate of organic matter breakdown. Mechanical fracturing of soil particles leads to more erosion prone size particles, and residues are buried leaving the soil unprotected from wind and water.

"But for many farmers some tillage is still necessary to prepare a seedbed for their crop," he says.

Historically tillage was adopted as a method to get large areas of land seeded quickly and easily. "The plow-broadcast-harrow method was faster and easier than individually planting seeds with a pointed stick. Although tillage is also a method of weed control, quick and easy seeding accounts for most of its popularity," he says.

"Tillage is a human concept, and as a general rule doesn't have any benefits for crop plants," he adds. "In fact, tillage makes conditions more difficult for the crop by reducing soil moisture, encouraging crusting, reducing water infiltration, reducing seed soil contact and increasing compaction from traffic and shearing. If you could get the seed planted quickly and easily without tillage, the crop wouldn't mind."

Zero-till drills provide that ability. Crop yields are equal and sometimes improved by such direct seeding he says. As well, studies show soil improvements in water infiltration, biological activity and decreased erosion.

But zero-till drills are expensive. "Not everyone can afford a big new zero-till drill, and luckily they aren't the only answer. Simply reducing tillage can conserve the soil, and cropping can be successful if tillage is carefully planned," he says.

Reduced tillage can be achieved by decreasing tractor speed, limiting tillage operations and reducing tillage depth. "The result is reduced erosion and reduced fuel bills," he says, "and, you're using the equipment that you already have. Just how little tillage you have to do depends on how much residue

Cont'd on page 5

is on the field, and what kind of seed drill you own. You really can't afford either too much or too little tillage."

Most air seeders have little problem seeding through crop residues, as long as it's spread evenly and left near or on the surface. "This equipment can put the seed in under the residue. In fact, they can be used as direct seeders and most can be adequately equipped to both seed and fertilize in a single operation," Gillund says.

Regular hoe drills can handle considerable residue he notes, but some cultivation is required to get adequate penetration. Good rates of fertilizer can go down with the seed, although a portion of nitrogen fertilizer usually needs to be pre-banded.

On the other hand, conventional double disc drills don't handle residue well and require adequately tilled seedbeds.

Contact: Grant Gillund
853-8109

New grading system in spotlight at oat conference

Oat growers are encouraged to bring oat samples to this year's Oat Producers Association of Alberta annual conference to see where their crop fits in the new oat grading schedule.

As part of conference activities Canadian Grain Commission staff will demonstrate the new grading schedule by providing a verbal grade on samples brought to the conference. They will also accept samples to be forwarded to their Calgary office for official grading. Sample bags are available at any licensed grain dealer's office.

"This year's conference is designed for oat growers and traders to get a better understanding of the new grading schedule," says Emile de Milliano, an Alberta Agriculture crops development officer. The "Making the most from oats" conference will be held at the Edmonton Inn November 19 and 20.

The new grading schedule came into effect on August 1. The changes emphasize soundness, groat color and reduced foreign material content with less emphasis on moderately stained or lightly mildewed kernels. The moisture meter conservation table has also been revised.

Mike Walter, chairman of the American Oat Association and an executive with Conagra Special Grains Products Co. will discuss the future of oats from a U.S. perspective. Conagra is a joint partner in the Westglen Milling operation that recently opened in Barrhead.

A returning feature of the conference is a producer panel discussing the conference theme. This year, Richard Nordstrom of Viking and Gordon Adams of Onoway will be joined by trader Bill Plumly of Agro-Alberta to talk about "making the most from oats". A market outlook will also return to the conference line-up. Among the other topics on the conference agenda are: future crop development; making the most from your fertilizer dollars; a transportation update; oats and cholesterol; and, guest speaker Red Williams on educating the urbanite.

For more information contact Peter Kirylchuk in Lac La Biche at 623-7732, Harvey Yoder at 623-5218, or de Milliano in Edmonton at 427-7366.

Contact: Emile de Milliano
427-7366

NISA information sessions scheduled across province

Alberta farmers looking for more facts about the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) can attend an information meeting in their community.

"Farmers have received NISA packages in the mail, but many still have questions about the NISA program and how to apply. These meetings will assist them," says Merle Good of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch.

Meetings will run through October, November and December across the province.

To confirm dates and times of the meeting nearest you, call toll-free 1-800-665-NISA, or contact your local district office of Alberta Agriculture.

Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

Editor's note: Please note a list of meetings follows. The list will be updated with November and December meetings as they are available.

TOWN	DATE	LOCATION/TIME
Barrhead	October 21	Glenreagh Hall 1:00 p.m.
Bow Island	October 30	1:30 p.m.
Bowle	October 31	Community Centre 10:00 a.m.
Cardston	October 23	2:00 p.m.
Debolt	October 28	Centennial Hall 7:00 p.m.
Delia	October 30	Community Hall 1:00 p.m.
Duchess	October 24	2:00 p.m.
Eaglesham	October 29	Centennial Hall 7:30 p.m.
Evansburg	October 29	1:30 p.m.
Falher	October 29	Falher Arena 1:30 p.m.
Foremost	October 22	Community Hall 9:30 a.m.
Ft. Assiniboine	October 25	Legion Hall 1:00 p.m.
Ft. Vermilion	October 31	Rec-Plex 7:00 p.m.
Gilby	October 23	Gilby Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Grassy Lake	October 28	Community Hall 1:30 p.m.
Grimshaw	October 30	Elks Hall 1:00 p.m.
Hanna	October 23	Legion 2:00 p.m.

High Level	October 31	High Level Rural Hall 1:30 p.m.
High River	October 30	Highwood Memorial Centre 7:00 p.m.
Hilda	October 21	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Innisfail	October 29	Moose Hall 7:30 p.m.
Jarvie	October 30	Community Centre 1:30 p.m.
Killam	October 24	Community Centre 1:30 p.m.
Lac La Biche	October 30	Jubilee Hall 7:00 p.m.
Lacombe	October 22	Memorial Centre 1:30 p.m.
Leduc	October 30	Elks Hall 1:30 p.m.
Lethbridge	October 31	Lethbridge Lodge 1:00 p.m.
Magrath	October 23	9:30 a.m.
Manyberries	October 22	Community Hall 1:30 p.m.
Medicine Hat	October 21	Cypress Centre 1:30 p.m.
Nampa	October 30	Nampa Complex 7:00 p.m.
Oyen	October 23	Legion Hall 10:00 a.m.
Peers	October 29	7:30 p.m.
Pine Lake	October 28	Hub Community Centre 7:30 p.m.
Pollockville	October 28	Pollockville Hall
Provost	October 29	Recreation & Cultural Centre 1:15 p.m.
Rycroft	October 28	Community Hall 1:00 p.m.
Ryley	October 25	Ryley Community Hall 1:15 p.m.
Spruce View	October 29	Community Hall 1:30 p.m.
St. Paul	October 30	Sr. Citizen Centre 1:15 p.m.
Stony Plain	October 30	Provincial Building 7:30 p.m.
Strathmore	October 21	Catholic Church (basement) 1:30 p.m.
Taber	October 28	Civic Centre 9:30 a.m.
Thorhild	October 21	Community Hall 7:00 p.m.
Tiger Lily	October 28	Tiger Lily Community Centre 1:00 p.m.
Tilley	October 24	9:30 a.m.
Valleyview	October 30	Memorial Hall 7:30 a.m.
Vegreville	October 21	Elks Hall 1:15 p.m.
Wainwright	October 28	Communiplex Theater 1:15 p.m.
Westlock	October 30	Legion Hall 9:00 a.m.

Agri-News briefs

Alberta 4-H leaders travel to Montana forum

Eight Alberta 4-H leaders were in Montana recently for that state's annual leaders' forum. Dianne Andersen of Strathmore, Art Hoover of Delia, Hazel Lubeck of Worsley, Patrick Medynski of Star, Bonnie Stringer of Sunnynook, Dave Vanberg of Grande Prairie, Audrey Weidrick of Pickardville and Wade Worthington of Turin attended the 14th annual forum. Workshops at the "growing in harmony" forum provided the leaders with training and opportunities for self development. The diverse workshop topics included stress, parliamentary procedure, 4-H enrichments, carcass evaluation, quilting, food safety, teaching trainers to teach, tips for new leaders, children at risk, clowning, interactive leadership, awards applications and active parenting. Alberta Power Limited and TransAlta Utilities sponsor the Montana leaders' trip. For more information, contact Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist, in Airdrie at 948-8509.

Alberta 4-Hers, leaders attend impact conference

Six Alberta 4-Hers and five Alberta 4-H leaders joined delegates and leaders from across Western Canada for a five day residential conference last week. Brenda Groves of Champion, Pamela Burdek of Lac La Biche, Stephen Holt of Bashaw, Cara McCarthy of Gibbons, Tony Mitchell of Sexsmith and Kirk Sorensen of Endiang were the 4-H members attending the Saskatchewan conference October 16 through 20 at the Rayner Centre. Delegates explored the rural/urban situation in Canada, examined the role of 4-H and agriculture and discussed the goals of the 4-H program. Alberta 4-H member participants were chosen at the provincial 4-H Selections program last May. Trip awards are based on 4-H and community involvement as well as interpersonal skills. Trip sponsorship is through the Canadian Agri Food Development Initiative Program and the provincial 4-H councils of the western provinces. The six Alberta leaders attending were: Adele Knudson of Sangudo, Carmen Gorius of

Cont'd on page 7

Hines Creek, Vivian Fox of Hill Spring, Marie Stelmach of Lamont, and George Jones of Sherwood Park. For the leaders, the conference was an opportunity to build on their leadership experience to learn additional skills and instructional techniques. Milo Barfuss, Lethbridge regional 4-H specialist, also attended the conference. "Milo and the leaders focused on how to utilize resources within rural communities to assist in the growth and development of 4-H," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H camping and exchange specialist. Attending leaders were awarded the trip based on their leadership experience. For more information, contact Stark in Airdrie at 948-8509, or Barfuss in Lethbridge at 381-6167.

U.S. doubles live hog countervailing duty

An added countervailing duty on live hogs going to the U.S. probably won't have much effect on already low levels of Canadian live hog exports says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. However, the retroactive duty will mean exporters of record from fiscal 1989-90 will be liable for the increased duty. That time period had some of the highest live hog export levels from Alberta to the U.S. notes Ron Gietz. The countervailing duty on live hogs has been more than doubled by the U.S. Department of Commerce to 8.2 (U.S) cents per pound. This will average about $22 (Can.) per live hog. The new rate is based on what the U.S calls subsidies paid to Canadian pork producers between April 1, 1989 and March 31, 1990. The Canadian Pork Council is expected to incorporate this latest countervail increase in its challenge to the free trade binational dispute panel. With support from provincial and federal governments, the council successfully challenged U.S. duties on pork. In June the binational panel ruled in Canada's favor and Washington was forced to return about $20 million in border duties collected on Canadian pork exports to the U.S. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at 427-5376.

Provinces sign fluid skim-off agreement

An agreement resolving the fluid skim-off problem has been reached by all provincial signatories to the national milk marketing plan. Signatories have agreed that as of August 1, 1991 each province must be fully responsible for the skim-off produced in their province. A formula was developed to phase-in implementation of the agreement so no province suffers undue hardship. The skim-off problem is a result of increased consumer preference for lower fat milk such as one per cent and skim. Consequently skim-off butterfat in Canada has steadily grown over the past five years to a level that accounts for 22 per cent of butterfat requirements. The historical skim-off levy paid by fluid milk producers was no longer adequate to deal with growing skim-off volumes. Revised levy figures will be submitted by the Canadian Dairy Commission to the Alberta Dairy Control Board for approval. Levies will increase to provincial fluid quota producers, and industrial milk producers holding national market share quota (MSQ) will have a decreased levy. Other elements in the national agreement were increasing the export sleeve from three to four per cent MSQ, moral support for increased Dairy Bureau funding and formation of a working committee to discuss outstanding industry issues. For more information, contact Alberta committee members: Jim Heron, chairman of the Alberta Dairy Control Board at 361-1231 (Wetaskiwin); Lloyd Johnston, secretary-manager of the Alberta Dairy Control Board at 361-1231; John Killoran at 842-3205 (Wainwright); or, Peter Schuld at 738-4439 (Iron Springs).

ACC producer meetings and zone elections start Oct. 28

The Alberta Cattle Commission will hold its annual delegate election and producer meetings starting October 28. The meetings will run through the week of November 9. Producers can vote for delegates, hear commission reports on activities and programs, share their thoughts and concerns about the cattle industry and the commission itself, and determine the future direction of beef cattle research through a referendum. Most meetings start at 7:30 p.m. with voting polls open from 8 p.m. through 10 p.m. For more information about the meetings, contact a local ACC director, or the ACC office in Calgary at 275-4400.

AGRI-NEWS

October 28, 1991

McClellan salutes National 4-H Week

Alberta's Associate Agriculture Minister invites Albertans to join in the salute to the 4-H movement during National 4-H Week, November 4 through 10.

"Please join me in celebrating the difference 4-H has made in our province," says Shirley McClellan. "The 4-H movement places an emphasis on personal development, community leadership and responsible citizenship. For the past 74 years that emphasis has fostered the progress of the agricultural industry and strengthened rural communities across Alberta.

"I salute the dedication and work of the individuals and groups that have made 4-H successful in Alberta and across Canada. I recognize their enthusiasm and energy, especially of the young Albertans who have learned from and enjoyed the many 4-H projects and programs in our province."

National 4-H Week is designated each year to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year and honor the thousands of 4-H members and volunteer leaders across Canada who contribute to the success of the program. Two national conferences are key events during the week. Six Alberta 4-H member delegates and five 4-H leaders will go to Toronto to attend those conferences from November 6 through 10. Representing Alberta will be 4-H members: Lori Andrews of Barrhead; Lori Konieczny of Innisfree; Tova Place of Nanton; Sandra Reti of Taber; Barbara Syzbunka of Sangudo and Deanna-Dawn Vigen of Coronation.

The Alberta representatives, along with delegates from other provinces, the United States and United Kingdom, will participate in workshops and group discussions, attend the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and visit points of interest around Toronto and area. Conference activities are under the umbrella theme of "4-H youth... making a difference". The 71 delegates will examine issues such as the environment, the vitality of rural communities, animal welfare and Canada's international competitiveness.

Alberta's delegates were chosen last spring at the provincial 4-H selections program. Trip awards are based on member activities, achievements and contributions in 4-H and their communities.

4-H leaders will concentrate on identifying and developing leadership qualities and skills at their national conference. Alberta representatives will be: Mary Henderson of Tees; Gordon Ceretzke of Andrew; Jim Sailer of Trochu; Frances Bogner of Berwyn; and, Delores Mohyluk of Barrhead.

All the delegates will be honored at a send-off banquet in Edmonton on November 5 sponsored by the Alberta Wheat Pool.

Alberta 4-H clubs are currently gearing up for a new club year. Rural youth between the ages of 10 and 21 can be members. "I encourage anyone interested to contact their nearest Alberta Agriculture district office for more information about the clubs in their area," says McClellan.

There are more than 7,200 4-H members and 2,400 adult volunteer leaders in Alberta involved in more than 20 different 4-H projects. Those projects range through various livestock projects such as beef cattle, dairy, sheep and light and heavy

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

McClellan salutes National 4-H Week	1
Isley releases ADC annual report	2
Dairy software learning opportunity at seminars	3
Biennial sheep symposium December 5-7	3
Many factors in house plant health	3
Prevention key to controlling spider mites on indoor plants	4
Briefs	5
NISA information meetings update	6
Coming agricultural events notice	9

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

horse to cooking, clothing, computers and small engines.

4-H will mark its 75th anniversary in Alberta next year in 1992. In 1988 4-H celebrated its 75th anniversary in Canada.

Contact: *Maureen Osadchuk*
Executive assistant to
the associate minister
427-2541

Ted Youck
Head, 4-H branch
422-9156

Marguerite Stark
Provincial 4-H camping
and exchange specialist
948-8509

Isley releases ADC annual report

The latest Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) financial statements for 1990-91 show the corporation has made good progress in its goal to provide first-class service to the province's farmers says Alberta's agriculture minister.

"Getting closer to the client has been ADC's primary objective in recent years," says Ernie Isley. He notes 95 per cent of all lending decisions are now made in the field, compared to almost none in 1988. "This means much more efficient operations, with faster and better service to our clients."

The decentralized ADC was able to capitalize on its strong field operations in 1990-91 when it delivered the province's comprehensive Southeastern Alberta Disaster Assistance Program (SEDAP). SEDAP offered nine per cent loans, interest-free for two or five years, or interest benefit options to farmers in the southeastern part of Alberta. Isley estimates SEDAP helped nearly 4,000 farmers by the time the program ended on June 30 this year. "This assistance came at a crucial time—seeding—enabling farmers to stay in business and put a crop in this year. SEDAP has helped the area regain the economic stability that clearly was absent in the late 1980's." Isley stresses aid for the area stretches well into the future, with farmers and local economies benefiting for five years and longer.

A new ADC service effort was introduced in 1990. In the innovative vendor mortgage program the seller carries the mortgage for the purchaser, who can take advantage of ADC's preferred interest rates. ADC guarantees a major portion of the loan and provides a premium return to sellers on their investment. Many of the transactions are between parents and children, making the vendor mortgage program an effective tool in estate planning and financial management. Isley calls the plan "an important way to keep capital investment in agriculture". In its first full year, $1.4 million in loans were approved.

The number of ADC clients having difficulty with their accounts continued to drop in 1990-91. "This indicates that the farm sector is managing its debt load reasonably well, due to assistance from ADC and the government," says Isley.

Arrears greater than one year dropped to five per cent of the direct farm lending portfolio, down from 6.3 per cent the previous year. This is the third straight year of significant decline. Land held by the corporation dropped from 462 to 273 quarter sections, reflecting a trend Isley calls "positive for farm production". As well, ADC's land carrying costs dropped 29 per cent in 1990-91, reflecting the reduced land portfolio.

Direct farm lending for the corporation is up for the second consecutive year, moving from $85.6 million to $100.7 million.

Isley notes ADC made great progress in fiscal restraint. "Belt tightening is a fact of life with this government. ADC has succeeded in dramatically reducing the amount it receives from the province, from $94.3 million in 1990 to $77.7 million in 1991, a budget reduction of 17.6 per cent. By making better quality loans and by responding quickly with customers in difficulty, this trend should continue."

ADC also provides financial services to the province's food processing and agribusiness sector. "I am particularly pleased that agribusiness continues to grow in Alberta," Isley says. "For the last two years, support for the value-added food processing sector has grown steadily. The industry, so important to the economic future of Alberta, has been significantly aided by ADC programs." The corporation has a total agribusiness portfolio of 92 accounts for $32 million. In the fiscal year, the number of accounts rose to 92 from 73.

ADC also guarantees Alberta Farm Development Loan Program (AFDL) loans that allow farmers to obtain credit from banks, credit unions, and Treasury Branches with longer terms and lower interest rates than would otherwise be possible. Total guarantees outstanding under this program reached $112 million.

ADC is a crown corporation delivering financial consulting and lending services to farmers, secondary food processors and other agribusinesses. Its total portfolio of direct and guaranteed loans stands at $1.1 billion.

Contact: *Bob Splane*
President and managing
director, ADC
679-1302

Brad Klak
Executive assistant to the minister
427-2137

Dairy software learning opportunity at seminars

Dairy producers can learn more about a variety of dairy management computer software packages at one of three seminars scheduled in late November.

"The seminars are designed for producers to learn more about a leading edge management technology," says Brian Rhiness, Alberta Agriculture dairy production specialist in Wetaskiwin. "It's really a good opportunity for dairy producers interested in purchasing either a computer or computer software to come and see what's available. Or, to learn more about a package their veterinarian or feed company may already be using."

Bruce Waldie, of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch, will open the seminars with an introductory presentation on the basic software needs of a dairy producer.

Six companies—Agpro Software, Bou-Matic, Westfalia, Alfa-Laval, Dairy Champ and Vampp—will tell what their package offers and how it works in morning sessions. Afternoons are open for participants to ask questions and see demonstrations of each program. As well, Alberta Dairy Herd Improvement Services (ADHIS) will be available to answer questions about data transfer through DHI. Alberta Agriculture regional dairy specialists will also be on hand to discuss computer analyses.

The seminars will be held in Lethbridge at Erickson's Restaurant on November 26, in Red Deer at the Westerner Agriplex's Frontier Room on November 27 and in the Elk's Hall in Leduc on November 28. November 20 is the pre-registration deadline.

Rhiness notes the pre-registration fee is $15 (plus GST) per person with a farm unit registration for $25 (plus GST). "We recognize that more than one person will probably use the farm computer and everyone involved in the operation may want to look at what's available," he says.

For more information about the seminars, contact the local Alberta Agriculture district office, a regional dairy specialist or Rhiness in Wetaskiwin at 361-1223.

Contact: Brian Rhiness
361-1223

Biennial sheep symposium December 5-7

Sheep production and livestock issues in the 1990s are on the agenda at the biennial Alberta Sheep Symposium December 5 through 7.

"This year's program offers topics in two main streams," says Wray Whitmore, Alberta Agriculture sheep specialist and the 1991 Alberta Sheep Symposium chairman. "On one side are topics related to specific sheep production management and marketing, on the other are more general livestock production issues such as food safety and animal welfare."

Two American speakers will bring their expertise to specific sheep production topics. Doug Hogue, a Cornell University professor, will make two presentations. He will discuss accelerated lambing systems and how producers can increase production in their flock, and nutrition for high production ewes and their lambs. Marie Bulgin, a professor at the Caine Veterinary Teaching Centre in Idaho, will examine baby lamb survival and the necessary management practices to ensure a good, healthy lamb crop.

The new owners of Alberta's lamb processing plant in Innsifail, Canada West Food Corporation, will discuss marketing Alberta lamb. Gary Haley and Ray Fielding will look at the kind of lamb Canada West wants and their company's marketing plans.

Other topics on the symposium agenda are: animal welfare and animal rights; how the new lamb grading system should affect you; and, food safety and food safety perceptions. Alberta Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley will also speak and is scheduled after the lamb banquet on Friday evening, December 6. A trade show will run during the symposium featuring handling, feed and production companies and products.

The symposium will open with a new feature at the first evening's reception. Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission directors will sit on a panel and be available for questions. A wool grading presentation is also planned.

Whitmore notes organizers made an effort to keep costs down. "Rates are reasonable for the Kananaskis-based symposium. Registration is $30 per person and meal and room charges are a single price."

Contact: Wray Whitmore
427-5083

Many factors in house plant health

Disease isn't always the culprit when a house plant looks unhealthy says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Neglect, poor growing conditions and improper treatment—more often than not—are the cause of a wilting or dying house plant," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks. "The good news is that if the problem is caught in time, your plant will usually recover and resume its normal growth."

Overwatering is the number one cause of house plant death. Too much water limits the oxygen available to the roots by filling the soil pore space. "If leaves begin to yellow and fall off, if the plant wilts even though the potting medium is wet, or

Cont'd on page 4

if the leaves and stems are rotting at the base, you can suspect an overwatering problem," she says.

To correct the problem, move the plant to a warm spot and let the potting medium dry out. Wait for a week and then gently remove the root ball from its container and look for new, white, healthy roots. If root regrowth is evident, put the plant back in the container and begin to water sparingly. Barkley notes if plant roots have started to rot, it may be too late to save the plant, but the same steps can be followed.

Underwatering can also cause problems she says. Slight underwatering causes a slow down in plant growth and smaller, darker leaves will grow. Plants will shed older leaves to sustain young leaves if they are seriously underwatered. Extreme dryness causes wilting. In extreme cases plants may die and appear mummified. She recommends immediately watering a wilted plant to minimize dehydration damage.

"It's very important that a plant receive the correct amount of water. Most plants will come with their specific needs spelled out from a garden centre or florist shop. If you have questions, ask a horticulturist."

The amount of light, drafts and fertilizer also play a role in house plant health.

Plants that receive too little light will have pale leaves and spindly growth. "Plants literally starve with insufficient light because there isn't enough photosynthetic activity to sustain them," she says.

Too much sunlight can also be harmful, especially for a plant that prefers shady conditions. Leaves may wilt and scorch, and roots can be killed if the root ball overheats.

Drafts can be deadly or can ruin the appearance of some house plants. Window ledges and near doorways are where this injury is most common.

Overfeeding, or providing too much fertilizer, may lead to lush and lanky growth, but it's not the best type says Barkley. This type of growth is very susceptible to infectious diseases she adds. "One sign of excess fertilizer salts is a build-up of minerals on the soil surface, the sides of pots or saucers. This can also be a sign of poor quality water."

Underfeeding can also cause weak or stunted growth, poorly colored flowers and leaves, and droopy lower leaves. "A lack of nitrogen is usually the cause. Yellow or brown patches, or deformed leaves, may indicate a lack of another nutrient such as calcium," she says.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
362-3391

Prevention key to controlling spider mites on indoor plants

Speckled and spotted leaves on house plants may be the first sign that a common winter house plant pest has arrived on your premises.

"Spider mites thrive in warm temperatures and low humidity and that's why they are a problem on house plants during Alberta winters," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Centre in Brooks.

Spider mites feed and breed on the underside of plant leaves. They are barely visible to the naked eye, but speckled or dull-colored leaves—pale yellow or bronze—are signs they are present. Mites do damage with their rasping-sucking mouth parts that they push into the leaves and use to remove cell contents. Large infestations cause deformed or stunted new growth and can also produce webbing.

"As with so many other plant pests, preventation is the key to control," says Barkley. To start, check new plants for mites before making them part of the household. One way to check for the minute mites is by holding a piece of white paper under the plant and then gently shaking the plant. The mites will show up as tiny dark specks on the paper.

Another preventative measure is increasing the humidity around house plants with a humidifier, or by setting plants on a pebble tray. Also, reduce the air temperature to about 20°C.

Barkley also advises checking plants regularly for mite infestations. "If you do have an infestation, isolate that plant so the mites won't spread to your other plants. Follow that by treating the infested plant. Insecticidal soap will provice some control, although chemical miticides may be necessary for stubborn infestations.

"If the infestation is severe, you may have to discard the plant and get a new one," she says.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
362-3391

Agri-News briefs

Alberta Barley Commission appoints general manager

Clifton Foster has been appointed general manager of the Alberta Barley Commission. Foster brings many years of senior managerial experience in agricultural organizations to his new position. Most recently he was secretary to the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council. The Alberta Barley Commission is a producer controlled and funded organization based in Calgary. It was established to work with industry, government and other organizations to take on research and market development initiatives and provide producer/industry information services. For more information, contact Richard Thiessen in Strathmore at 934-4331

Farm Implement Board has new look

There are some new faces on the Farm Implement Board says the board's secretary Allan Krahn. The most recent appointment to the ministerial advisory board was Ken Martin of Calgary. He replaces Dwayne Dixon who retired this summer as the Alberta Wholesale Implement Association representative on the board. The board also has a new chairman. At the beginning of the year Bill Neis, a farmer from Mirror and board member since March 1986, was appointed chairman. Three other new members also joined the board this year. They are: Maurice Grancoeur of Camrose, representing the Canada West Implement Dealers Association; Bernie VonTettenborn, a farmer from Round Hill representing Unifarm; and, Richard Stamp, a farmer from Enchant. The two other board members are Rodney Rockarts, a farmer from Clairmont, and Clem Kuelker of Didsbury, Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association representative The Farm Implement Board is appointed by the agriculture minister to provide advice on various matters pertaining to the Farm Implement Act and its administration. The board may also make recommendations about trade practices related to the farm machinery business. It is authorized to review farm machinery complaints not resolved through Farm Implement Act Administration mediation. For more information, contact Krahn in Edmonton at 427-2188.

Christian farmers convention Nov.27-28

The Christian Farmers Federation of Alberta will hold its 18th annual convention November 27 and 28 in Edmonton. A number of diverse topics are on the conference agenda. Featured speakers are Lloyd Quantz of Agri-Trends Research on the farm financial crisis and Douglas Roche, former Canadian ambassador on peace and disarmament to the United Nations, on the changing world order and how it affects agriculture and trade. A participant in the current Canada-Ukraine farm exchange will discuss his Canadian experience and share thoughts on changes in his homeland. A representative from the Reform Party will talk about that party's agricultural policies. The conference starts at noon on the 27th and runs through 5 p.m. with a 7 p.m. banquet Sessions start at 9 a.m. the next morning and run though 5 p.m. The conference is open to anyone interested in attending. For more information, contact Paul Eastwood in Edmonton at 428-6981 or 421-8382.

South Ag societies hold 5th annual mini conference

The southern Alberta agricultural societies will hold their fifth annual sharing mini conference November 22 and 23. Special guest speakers at the conference are volunteer leaders from a number of Alberta agricultural societies in Bashaw, Chestermere, Bassano, Red Deer, Calgary and Camrose. They will discuss networking, using new ideas and youth board member and fair volunteers. Returning to the conference is the second annual mug exchange and "hopics", an opportunity to share and exchange ideas. The Siksika Nation Blackfoot Agricultural Society hosts the conference, with co-host the Bassano Agricultural Society, at the Deerfoot Sportsplex in Gleichen. For more information contact Rae Hunter in Edmonton at 427-2171.

Organic organization receives funding

The Canadian Organic Unity Project (COUP) has received funding commitments from the federal and provincial governments to produce a uniquely Canadian set of organic food production standards with an accreditation body to oversee those standards. The $151,200 project will be funded half by the federal Canadian Agri-Food Development Initiative, 25 per cent by the provinces (including Alberta) and 25 per cent by the 35 organic food certification organizations operating in Canada. The eventual system will be integrated into the global market through the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM). It's expected the Canadian standards will be in place by January 1992, putting Canada one month ahead of Japan and 15 months ahead of the U.S., giving Canadian farmers a superior position in the international market. Certified organic produce commands a 20 to 50 per cent premium over conventionally grown products. For more information, contact Dwayne Smith of the Sustainable Agriculture Association in Vulcan at 485-2808 or 485-6461.

Agribition continues to expand beyond livestock show

The Canadian Western Agribition will have some new wrinkles in its 1991 edition November 23 through 29 in Regina. While Agribition remains one of the largest livestock shows in the world, the associated events continued to grow showcasing value-added foods, agricultural technology and information transfer. Among the innovations and new features at the 1991 Agribition is a trade show concept at the beef show. Integrated displays will feature superior Canadian beef and genetics in the purebred beef cattle barns. The main 530-spot trade show has a new venue to spotlight products, a mini-theatre stage. While youth participation is traditional, for the first time organizers have designated a specific day—November 22—for 4-H and youth events. The Agri-Ed showcase will feature a food safety theme. Grade seven, eight and nine class tours will be part of a pilot project designed to teach students about food processing and the role of agriculture in society. Classes will follow the path of a simple hamburger from the cow to the consumer. This year's major issues dialogue theme is "friend or foe: the role of big business in the farm economy". For more information about Agribition activities, contact the Agribition office in Regina at (306)565-0565.

Truck bale handlers as "Implements of Husbandry"

Alberta Transportation has recently clarified the interpretation of "Implements of Husbandry" as it relates to farmers installing bale handlers on their trucks. Regulatory and highway enforcement staff will enforce the following for a three year period. Trucks adapted by farmers as self-loading bale handlers for their use on farms will be included in, and be an extension of the definition for "Implements of Husbandry". Farmers may operate these vehicles, unlicensed, for transporting bales to and from their farms, on any Alberta highway, provided that the vehicle is operated by a properly licensed driver who is 16 years old or older. When appropriate, the vehicle while transporting bales on any highway, must carry wide load signage and slow moving vehicle signage. For more information, call Gordon Bellingham at the Motor Transport Board in Red Deer at 340-5021.

Hanson 1991 poultry serviceman of the year

Jim Hanson, head of Alberta Agriculture's poultry disease section with veterinary services in Edmonton, was recently named the 1991 Poultry Serviceman of the Year. The award was presented at the annual Poultry Servicemen's Workshop earlier this month. Hanson has worked in various capacities for the department's veterinary pathology laboratory since 1969. Hanson was cited for professionalism, dedication, availibility "above and beyond the call of duty" of both he and his staff at the Veterinary Services Laboratory. Nominations for the fifth annual award are available from Alberta Agriculture's pork and poultry branch in Edmonton at 2nd Floor, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6.

NISA information meetings update

Editor's note: Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) information meetings have been scheduled across the province to assist Alberta farmers with questions they may have about the program and how to apply. **Agri-News** will continue to update the list of meetings through December. To confirm the date and time of the meeting nearest you, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office or call toll-free 1-800-665-NISA.

TOWN	DATE	LOCATION/TIME
Balzac	November 4	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Beaverlodge	November 12	Albright Hall 1:00 p.m
Beiseker	November 27	7:30 p.m.
Bonanza	November 7	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Bonnyville	November 4	Bonnyville Agriplex 7:00 p.m.

Bow Island	October 30	1:30 p.m.
Boyle	October 31	Community Centre 10:00 a.m.
Byemoor	October 29	Byemoor Hall 1:30 p.m.
Camrose	November 1	Regional Exhibition Bldg 12:00 p.m.
Claresholm	November 13	Provincial Building 10:00 a.m.
Cluny	November 19	Cluny Hall 9:00 a.m.
Consort	November 7	1:30 p.m.
Coronation	November 6	Elks Hall 7:00 p.m.
Debolt	October 28	Centennial Hall 7:00 p.m.
Delia	October 30	Community Hall 1:00 p.m.
Didsbury	November 21	
Eaglesham	October 29	Centennial Hall 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton	November 28	Mayfield Inn
Evansburg	October 29	1:30 p.m.
Fairview	November 12	Fine Arts Centre 7:30 p.m.
Falher	October 29	Falher Arena 1:30 p.m.
Falun	November 28	7:30 p.m.
Fort Macleod	November 13	Scarlett & Gold Inn 2:00 p.m.
Ft. Vermilion	October 31	Rec-Plex 7:00 p.m.
Gilby	November 7	Gilby Community Hall 7:00 p.m.
Grande Prairie	November 1	GP Inn Canola Growers 2:30 p.m.
Grande Prairie	November 12	Trumpeter Motor Inn 7:00 p.m.
Grassy Lake	October 28	Community Hall 1:30 p.m.
Grimshaw	October 30	Elks Hall 1:00 p.m.
High Level	October 31	High Level Rural Hall 1:30 p.m.
High Prairie	November 1	1:00 p.m.
High River	October 30	Highwood Memorial Centre 7:00 p.m.
High River	November 19	Highwood Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
Innisfail	October 29	Moose Hall 7:30 p.m.
Jarvie	October 30	Community Centre 1:30 p.m.
Josephburg	November 6	Community Hall 7:00 p.m.
Keephills	November 26	Keephills Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
La Crete	November 1	Community Hall
Lac La Biche	October 30	Jubilee Hall 7:00 p.m.
Lamont	November 7	Lamont Rec Centre 7:00 p.m.
Leduc	October 30	Elks Hall 1:30 p.m.
Lethbridge	November 27	Sven Ericksons 1:00 p.m.
Lethbridge	October 31	Lethbridge Lodge 1:00 p.m.
Lomond	November 6	1:00 p.m.
Lyalta	November 19	Lyalta Hall 7:00 p.m.
Manning	November 13	Battle River Ag Hall 1:00 p.m.
Mayerthorpe	November 27	7:00 p.m.
Monitor	November 7	Monitor Hall 1:30 p.m.
Nampa	October 30	Nampa Complex 7:00 p.m.
Olds	November 14	OC LecThea 8:30 a.m.
Olds	November 18	College Lecture Theatre 1:00 p.m.
Onoway	November 13	Legion Hall 7:00 p.m.
Peers	October 29	7:30 p.m.
Picture Butte	November 22	1:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 21	7:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 28	Heritage Inn 1:30 p.m.
Pine Lake	October 28	Hub Community Centre 7:30 p.m.
Pollockville	October 28	Pollockville Hall
Ponoka District	November 4	Mecca Glen School 7:30 p.m.
Ponoka District	November 19	Crestomere School 7:30 p.m.
Provost	October 29	Recreation & Cultural Centre 1:15 p.m.
Raymond	November 5	1:30 p.m.
Red Deer	November 8	Capri Motor Inn 1:00 p.m.
Rimbey	November 26	1:30 p.m.
Rocky Mt. House	November 21	Provincial Building 7:30 p.m.
Rosalind	October 30	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Rycroft	October 28	Community Hall 1:00 p.m.
Smoky Lake	November 7	Smoky Lake Complex 1:15 p.m.
Spruce View	October 29	Community Hall 1:30 p.m.
St. Paul	October 30	Sr. Citizen Centre 1:15 p.m.
Standard	November 19	2:00 p.m.
Stettler	November 5	Memorial Hall 1:30 p.m.
Stony Plain	October 30	Provincial Building 7:30 p.m.

Taber	November 15	Pulse Growers
Taber	October 28	Civic Centre 9:30 a.m.
Thorsby	November 6	Community Hall 1:30 p.m.
Three Hills	November 1	Community Centre 1:00 p.m.
Tiger Lily	October 28	Tiger Lily Community Centre 1:00 p.m.
Two Hills	November 1	Centennial Hall 1:15 p.m.
Valleyview	October 30	Memorial Hall 7:30 a.m.
Vauxhall	November 4	1:30 p.m.
Vulcan	November 6	7:00 p.m.
Wainwright	October 28	Communiplex Theater 1:15 p.m.
Warner	November 1	9:30 a.m.
Westlock	October 30	Legion Hall 9:00 a.m.
Westlock	November 20	Legion Hall 9:00 a.m.
Wetaskiwin	November 6	1:30 p.m.
Worsley	November 13	Legion Hall 7:30 p.m.

Coming agricultural events

- Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in **December, 1991 or in January, February, March or later in 1992**? Please state the name of the event.

- What are the dates?

- Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

- Please give the **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed.

- This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by November 21, 1991 to:

Agri-News Editor
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

*("Coming agricultural events" is published four times a year in **Agri-News**. The next list will be December 2, 1991)*

AGRI-NEWS

November 4, 1991

Federal economists forecast higher farm income

Realized net farm income in Alberta is expected to increase by two per cent in 1991 Agriculture Canada economists say in a third quarter outlook.

Their revised 1991 farm income projections don't incorporate the $800 million federal farm aid package announced October 10, but do incorporate the new Gross Revenue Insurance Program (GRIP) and the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA).

"With the $180 million expected from this most recent federal initiative Alberta net farm income should hit about $590 million which is at the five-year average level," says Bill Schissel, senior statistician with Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch. Without the latest federal payment, net income was projected at just over $410 million. That total was slightly above the 1990 total of $403 million which represented a 45 per cent drop from 1989 net income.

Crop receipts are expected to be down about five per cent at about $1.5 billion. Increased deliveries seem to be offsetting the substantial drop in wheat and other grain commodity prices he says.

Livestock returns are also down in 1991, expected at about $2.25 billion. "The livestock sector is still strong, although cyclic price drops are reflected in the lower overall returns," he says. "As well, receipt totals for the two sectors are pointing to a clear divergence between the crop and livestock sectors. In the past they were approximately equal."

Total farm operating expenses are expected to drop slightly. On the good news side for farmers, land rental, interest payments and Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance premiums were lower. These were largely offset by higher prices for fuel and machinery repair as well as the additional costs of GRIP premiums. However, the costs of GRIP premiums were offset to some degree in 1991 because Western Grain Transportation Stabilization premiums were no longer deducted from grain receipts after July 31, 1991.

Contact: Bill Schissel
427-4011

Agribusiness wins top export award

A Westlock agribusiness was named Export Firm of the Year for 1991 during the tenth annual export month in Alberta.

Alberta Ag-Industries Ltd. is a repeat export month winner. Last year it received recognition in the "manufacturer/producer employing between one and 25 people" category.

The company, with less than 25 employees, has captured the attention and interest of farm operations around the globe. A major manufacturer of silage bags, bag filling machines, polywarehouse systems and silawrap machines, the company's reputation is based on a superior quality product and strong customer service.

In 1990 Alberta Ag-Industries Ltd.'s export sales represented 79 per cent of gross annual sales. While the Canadian and U.S. client-base continues to grow, new market interest is opening up in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. Last year the company introduced the bag filling system to farmers

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Federal economists forecast higher farm income	1
Agribusiness wins top export award	1
Research centre releases ripper evaluation reports	2
Research centre evaluates air drill	2
Medicine Hat hosts second ag ambassador fair	3
Soil conservation planning workshop for professionals	3
4-H judging team does well at Colorado competition	4
Briefs	5
NISA information meetings update	6

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

in Kenya and Botswana. The company also began negotiations with an Italian distributor and made huge inroads into England and Russia. As well, the polywarehouse system was introduced on a trial basis to South Korea and Kuwait. Despite a strong, established U.S. competitor, Alberta Ag-Industries has penetrated the international market with an extensive dealer network, complete customer services (including a 1-800 line in the U.S.) and unfailing Canadian quality.

Two other agribusinesses also received 1991 Alberta export awards, Canadian Livestock International of Red Deer in the trade brokage sectoral category and Agriteam Canada Consulting Ltd. of Calgary for an achievement award in the service export category.

Canadian Livestock International (CLI) is Canada's largest exporter of purebred beef cattle. In 1990 CLI exported over 2,800 head of cattle, 110 embryos and over 1,000 units of cattle semen. CLI also maintains full-time offices in Red Deer, Guadalajara, Mexico and Bogota, Columbia as well as representatives in Brazil.

Last year CLI spearheaded the first major sale in the past 15 years of livestock from Alberta to the People's Republic of China. Plus, the company exported the largest shipment of Western Canadian pedigreed beef cattle and embryos to Colombia and Brazil.

To reinforce the profile of its high quality Canadian product, CLI developed a unique tagging system identifying its livestock as Canadian produced and exported by CLI.

In the four years since its inception, Agriteam Canada Consulting's revenues more than tripled. The company has sold to nine countries and 99 per cent of its contracts are international. Among Agriteam's clients are the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Some of the services Agriteam provides are in crop and grain production, livestock production and processing, and training and technology transfer. Through Agriteam's marketing team, the international community is becoming further aware of the best agricultural expertise Alberta can offer to developing nations.

The export awards are sponsored by Alberta Economic Development and Trade and Alberta Agriculture.

Contact: Barb Marcinkoski
427-0670

Research centre releases ripper evaluation reports

Some of the questions farmers have about operating deep rippers and subsoilers are answered in a recently released set of reports by the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre.

Centre staff evaluated two deep rippers and one subsoiler. The reports include information about power requirements, soil fracturing, rock protection, soil finishing, point wear and ease of operation, and adjustment of rippers and subsoilers.

"Many farmers have asked about the power requirements of rippers," says Greg Magyar, a field technologist at the centre. During the test the power required to pull rippers and subsoilers varied from eight to 20 PTO horsepower per foot at speeds of 2.5 to 4.5 miles per hour he says. He adds this compares to a range of three to seven horsepower per foot for cultivators at five miles per hour.

All of the units produced good soil fracture when the soil was dry. Differences in performance came when the soil was moist. This requires special caution in using a ripper or subsoiler, especially by irrigation farmers.

"In general," says Magyar, "soil shouldn't be ripped or subsoiled when it's moist. This is especially true on land irrigated with a centre pivot system. A ripper shank will make a narrow slice in moist soil. If this slice crosses a pivot track, the tower will get stuck while irrigating." Magyar recommends farmers avoid this problem by ripping around the pivot tracks.

Units tested by the centre were the Kello-Bilt series 5000 subsoiler, the Tye paratill model 118-610 and the Tebben automatic reset deep till.

For more information about subsoilers and deep rippers, contact the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre, 3000 College Drive South, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 1L6, or call 329-1212.

Contact: Greg Magyar
329-1212

Research centre evaluates air drill

Farmers who want to know more about air drills can contact the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre.

The centre has just released an evaluation report on the Flexi-Coil 5000 air drill and is currently testing the Case IH 8500 air drill says Lawrence Papworth, an engineer at the centre.

Papworth notes there is some confusion between the terms "air drill" and "air seeder". The air drill is a cross between an air seeder and conventional press drills. Most air drills have conventional press drill openers and packers with an air delivery system. Air seeders, on the other hand, have an air delivery system mounted on a cultivator. Both air drills and air seeders make filling and transporting easier with a central tank.

"Air drills have become popular because farmers can't fit an air seeder into their farming systems," says Papworth. "Two of an air drill's advantages are that packing is performed while seeding and shallow seed depths can be set."

Air seeders also have advantages. Air seeders can handle large amounts of trash and kill weeds while seeding.

Cont'd on page 3

The centre tested the Great Plains air drill several years ago and has tested many air seeders through the years Evaluation reports are available on all of the units tested

For more information on air drills and air seeders, contact the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre, 3000 College Drive South, Lethbridge, T1K 1L6, or call 329-1212.

Contact: Lawrence Papworth
329-1212

Medicine Hat hosts second ag ambassador fair Nov. 22-23

A display that considers alternatives for feeding a hungry world and the role Alberta plays in the solution is an example of the type of entry that will be at the second annual Agricultural Ambassador School Fair in Medicine Hat on November 23.

The special school fair with an agricultural approach has a number of linked goals says Betty Gabert, Alberta Agriculture's Ag in the Classroom co-ordinator and one of the fair's organizers. "First, there's the basic agricultural awareness we want to create in both students and teachers. But more specifically, the fair was launched as part of our quest for agricultural ambassadors in all Alberta schools, so we're also including a mini-conference for these teacher ambassadors."

The mini-conference will start with a Friday evening social on November 22 and follow with a choice of round table discussions the next morning. Among the topics are: gifted programs; Explore Nutritious Alberta; high school challenges and opportunities in agriculture; food safety; art as a strategy for learning; using puppets; and, environmental concerns and land resource management. As well, keynote speaker Rona Jevne, a renowned University of Alberta professor, will discuss networking.

There are still spaces available for teachers to participate in the conference notes Gabert. Late registration will be accepted until November 15. She adds the conference is completely sponsored by the agricultural industry including meals by commodity group organizations and accommodation by individual agricultural societies.

Endorsed by the provincial Education Minister Jim Dinning and Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan, the fair's competition categories encompass all grades from one through 12 and involved topics and projects related to agriculture in social studies, science, language arts and open classes that could include other school subject areas.

"The agricultural industry and the local community in Medicine Hat were very quick to respond to sponsoring fair classes and activities," says Gabert. Prize money of $20 for first, $15 for second and $10 for third will be awarded in each class, as well as ribbons to the top five entries in each sub category.

There are also special awards to individual high point winners in each division and a super participation award for the junior high division. The Alberta Wheat Pool will again sponsor an all-expense paid family weekend for the persons with the most points in each division. Weigl Educational Publishers Ltd. will give the junior high school with the most entries a class set (30) of their new "Living Soil" resource with a teacher manual.

Gabert says she expects much stronger entries this year with increased interest in the fair. Some deadlines for fair classes aren't until November 15, although most are for November 7.

The exhibits will be open to the public starting Saturday (November 23) at 1 p.m. The major awards will be presented then to kick-off the fair. As well as the exhibits, a number of activities will take place throughout the afternoon. A living version of the program's cartoon mascot, a border collie named Chase, will be part of a stock dog demonstration. People can also try their hand at roping from a barrel after a calf roping demonstration.

The Agricultural Ambassador program is an outgrowth of the Summer Agricultural Institute, an intensive 12-day, full credit, fourth year university level course for teachers. The 1992 institute will be held at Lakeland College in Vermilion.

For more information about the Agricultural Ambassador School Fair, the Agricultural Ambassador program or the Summer Agricultural Institute, call Gabert in Edmonton at 427-2403.

Contact: Betty Gabert
427-2403

Soil conservation planning workshop for professionals

Conservation professionals will discuss common approaches to conservation planning across the Prairies at a first-of-its-kind workshop December 9 through 11 in Edmonton.

The first interprovincial soil and water conservation planning workshop will examine techniques, trends and opportunities in conservation planning on agricultural lands in Western Canada. "Besides being a valuable opportunity to exchange information with your peers, workshop results will be useful in developing preliminary soil and water conservation plan standards and guidelines," says Leon Marciak, an Alberta Agriculture soil conservation specialist and the chair of the interprovincial organizing committee.

The workshop is designed for professionals who provide technical information and program delivery to the farm community. The sessions will feature many aspects of conservation planning as well as status reports from five provincial agricultural departments.

"We'll actually be going beyond the borders of the Prairies as provincial representatives from British Columbia and Ontario will also outline their conservation planning activities,

Cont'd on page 4

programs and policies," says Marciak. John Hermans, head of Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch, will describe Alberta's programs.

Two panel discussions, one on farm conservation planning and the other on regional/municipal conservation planning will bring particular view points into focus. Another workshop sessions will look at particular information requirements in conservation planning. Speakers will discuss soils, water, the human resource, climate and vegetation. "This will be a useful forum, especially in light of future environmental programming and initatives," he says.

The workshop is sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada and the Soil and Water Conservation Society (Alberta chapter). For more information, contact Marciak or Donna Beaver in Edmonton at (403)422-4385.

Contact: Leon Marciak
422-4385

4-H judging team does well at Colorado competition

The Alberta 4-H representatives at this year's Western 4-H Roundup Livestock Judging contest turned in the best team performance in the three years provincial teams have gone to the Colorado competition.

The four member judging team placed in the middle of the pack of 18 4-H teams from across the western United States plus Hawaii and Florida. Another 10 Future Farmers of America (FFA) teams also took part in the competition. "This ninth place finish was the highest our team has placed, and we're very pleased with the team showing," says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H livestock specialist.

Troy Fisher, 19, of Mayerthorpe, Tamsin Hodgetts, 18, of Camrose, Wayne Sargeant, 18, of Rimbey and Sheila Thompson, 18, of Milk River were the Alberta team members and the only Canadian team at the annual competition. "They judged beef, sheep and hog classes, and a real variety of classes within each of the livestock categories," says Wiegman. "For example, the beef classes included Limousin bulls, Angus heifers and market steers."

The beef classes were also where the Alberta team posted their strongest results. As a team they were fifth in the beef element of the competition with Sargeant 10th overall, Thompson 15th and Fisher 16th. Sargeant, also placed highest in the overall 4-H judging competition rankings. He was 20th, and Fisher was 26th.

"The participants really enjoyed their experience at the competition and other Round-up events," Wiegman adds. "This is the third group who have had this unique opportunity through the sponsorship of Uniblok Canada."

Uniblok is a division of Superior Feeds located in Rockyford. The company also sponsors an eight member Alberta 4-H team at Agribition's 4-H judging later this month in Regina.

Contact: Henry Wiegman 427-2541 Larry Helfrich 1-800-661-8339

Agri-News briefs

Pesticide sale, handling, use and application regulation workshops

A series of workshops on the proposed regulations related to pesticide sales, handling, use and application are scheduled throughout Alberta during November. The workshops are intended to provide clarification of the proposed regulations prior to interested persons preparing written submissions. Written input about the draft regulations must be forwarded to Alberta Environment before December 31, 1991. Workshops are open to anyone interested in learning more about the proposed pesticide regulations. Pre-registration is required to ensure facilities can accommodate workshop participants. The day long sessions start with an overview of the proposed environmental protection act, followed by an overview of the draft pesticide regulations. In the afternoon participants have a choice between pesticide applicator issues, and wholesale/retail vendor and registrant regulations. The first of these workshops is in Edmonton on November 8. The other locations and dates are: November 19, Red Deer; November 22, Vermilion; November 25, Calgary; November 26, Lethbridge; and, November 29, Grande Prairie. People who register will receive information on the exact workshop location. Registration forms and other information are available from the pesticide management branch in Edmonton at 427-5855; or, 297-8271 in Calgary, 381-5511 in Lethbridge, or 538-5460 in Grande Prairie.

Free booklet lists European sulphur fertilizer producers

A new booklet listing European sulphur fertilizer producers and products is now available from the Sulphur Institute. "European Sulphur Fertilizer Producers" is the second in an institute series listing sulphur producers. The first listed North American producers and products. The booklet is available free of charge to producers, retailers, representatives of advisory services and any individuals with an interest in sulphur fertilizers. "The demand for plant nutrient sulphur in Europe has increased rapidly over the last decade," says Donald Messick, manager of the institute's agricultural programs. "Stricter environmental regulations and decreasing applications of sulphur to the soil have led to the depletion of this important nutrient. As a result, sulphur is being included in many more fertilizer products." For a free copy, send your name and address to "European Sulphur Fertilizer Producers", the Sulphur Institute, Suite 612, 1140 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, D.C., 20036, USA, or call (202)331-9660 or FAX (202)293-2940.

Manning to speak at AIA luncheon Nov.18

The Alberta Institute of Agrologists (Calgary branch) is hosting a luncheon meeting featuring the leader of the Reform Party. Preston Manning will present his party's agricultural platform and cover major issues affecting agriculture today. The meeting is scheduled for November 18 at the Calgary Convention Centre, Macleod Hall A. Registration begins at 11 a.m. For more information, contact Isabel McPherson at AIA Calgary office at 244-4487.

Northlands Farmfair November 8-16

Almost 2,400 entries from nearly 800 exhibitors in 40 beef, dairy, swine and horse shows and sales have been received for Edmonton Northlands Farmfair'91. The annual international livestock showcase will be held at Northlands AgriCom November 8 through 16. Entries were received from across Alberta as well as British Columbia through Quebec, plus several American states from as far away as Kansas. Maine Anjou is the feature beef breed in 1991 and its show, prospect steer show and sale run through the last three days of Farmfair, November 14 through 16. Another 2,000 entries are expected for the poultry and rabbit show, 36 heavy horse teams will compete in the provincial draft horse pulling championships and the provincial 4-H judging competition will test the skills of 4-H contestants. Among the special events are a country market, western art show and sale, petting zoo, rooster crowing contest, and fur and feather fun benefit auction. The 18th annual Canadian Finals Rodeo held in conjunction with Farmfair will run November 13 through 17. Farmfair admission is $3 per person with children under 12 free, and a parking charge is also effect. For more information, contact Mel Minchau or Elaine Emerson at 471-7293.

1991 Outstanding young farmers finals in Calgary Nov.7-11

Eight farm couples from across Canada will be honored at the 1991 Outstanding Young Farmers National Awards program in Calgary November 7 through 11. Three of the couples will be selected as receipients of the W.R. Motherwell awards for excellence in the farming industry. The eight regional representatives are: Casey and Linda Houweling of Delta,

Cont'd on page 6

B.C.; Michael and Deborah Trefiak, Edgerton, Alberta; Richard and Solange Godenir, Aneroid, Saskatchewan; Curtis and Gloria Sims, MacGregor, Manitoba; David and Bonnie Loewith, Lynden, Ontario; Lloyd and Barbar Wicks, Bobcaygen, Ontario; Vital and Lise Vouligny, Saint-Celestin, Quebec; and, Doug and Healther Hennigar, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. For more information, contact Terry Sinton, promotions chair, at 245-7040 in Calgary.

Surviving crisis theme of AWSA conference

Surviving the crisis is the theme of this year's Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture conference (AWSA). The conference runs November 15 and 16 at the Port O'Call Inn in Calgary. Speakers will discuss the problems, possible solutions and methods of survival. Keynote speaker is Red Williams discussing public perception of the agricultural community. Other topics on the agenda are alternative energy, holistic farming and the futures market. A panel will discuss survival strategies. Registration is $65 for a farm couple, $35 for a single registration and $20 for a one-day registration. For conference information, contact Jean Berger in Nanton at 645-2059.

CBC youth program comes to the farm

While cartoon characters wage their battles on other channels, CBC's "Street Cents" will be airing a special called "FARM" on Saturday, November 23, at 10 a.m. The network program is youth oriented with financial, consumer and environmental information. This year more rural youth items are being included. Street Cents is fast paced with skits, music, plots and multiple hosts and has a national audience of over 500,000. In its first season last year, the program won five major awards, three of them international. PBS has asked CBC to do an American version. For more information, contact Heather Mitchell, CBC Calgary, at 521-6157.

Slaughter cattle price fall triggers NTSP payment

Canadian slaughter cattle prices averaged over $6 less during the third quarter of 1991 than during the same time period last year, and that drop has triggered National Tripartite Stabilization Program (NTSP) payments. The payments were announced on October 28 at the program committee's regular quarterly meeting. Per head payments of $33.68 for July, $98.09 for August and $131.06 for September were generated. September prices plunged to mid-1986 levels averaging $75.27 per hundredweight. Program payments are activated when the national average market prices falls below a set national support price. The support price equals cash costs for the current month plus 85 per cent of the average margin for the previous five years. Program premiums are shared equally by producers, the provincial government and the federal government. For more information, contact Alberta Agriculture's central program support at 422-9167.

Canola production/marketing seminar in Lacombe Nov.14

The Alberta Canola Producers Commission and the Alberta Agriculture Lacombe district office are sponsoring a canola production and marketing seminar November 14. The afternoon seminar will be held at the Agriculture Canada research station library. The program includes: a market outlook with Errol Anderson of Palliser Grain; a "Grow with Canola" production centre update by John Mayko; what's new in varieties and management by Alberta Agriculture's Phil Thomas; and, an Alberta Canola Producers Commission business session. For more information, contact Dave Lemke, commission director, in Eckville at 746-5708, or the Lacombe district office at 782-3301 or 340-7161.

NISA information meetings update

Editor's note: Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) information meetings have been scheduled across the province to assist Alberta farmers with questions they may have about the program and how to apply. **Agri-News** will continue to update the list of meetings through December. To confirm the date and time of the meeting nearest you, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office or call toll-free 1-800-665-NISA.

TOWN	DATE	LOCATION/TIME
Athabasca	November 7	Community Centre 7:30 p.m.
Balzac	November 4	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Beaverlodge	November 12	Albright Hall 1:00 p.m
Beiseker	November 27	7:30 p.m.
Bonanza	November 7	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Bonnyville	November 4	Bonnyville Agriplex 7:00 p.m.
Claresholm	November 13	Provincial Building 10:00 a.m.
Cluny	November 19	Cluny Hall 9:00 a.m.
Coronation	November 6	Elks Hall 7:00 p.m.
Didsbury	November 21	
Drayton Valley	November 19	Provincial Building, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton	November 28	Mayfield Inn

Fairview	November 12	Fine Arts Centre 7:30 p.m.
Falun	November 28	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Fort Macleod	November 13	Scarlett & Gold Inn 2:00 p.m.
Gilby	November 7	Gilby Community Hall 7:00 p.m.
Grande Prairie	November 12	Trumpeter Motor Inn 7:00 p.m.
Highridge	November 6	Community Hall 7 p.m.
High River	November 19	Highwood Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
High River	November 28	Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
Josephburg	November 6	Community Hall 7:00 p.m.
Keephills	November 26	Keephills Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Lamont	November 7	Lamont Rec Centre 7:00 p.m.
Lethbridge	November 27	Sven Ericksons 1:00 p.m.
Lomond	November 6	1:00 p.m.
Lyalta	November 19	Lyalta Hall 7:00 p.m.
Manning	November 13	Battle River Ag Hall 1:00 p.m.
Mayerthorpe	November 27	Legion Hall 1:00 p.m.
Monitor	November 7	Monitor Hall 1:30 p.m.
Morinville	November 4	Rec Centre 7 p.m.
Olds	November 14	Olds College Lecture Theatre 8:30 a.m.
Olds	November 18	Olds College Lecture Theatre 1:00 p.m.
Onoway	November 13	Legion Hall 7:00 p.m.
Picture Butte	November 22	1:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 21	7:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 28	Heritage Inn 1:30 p.m.
Pine Lake	November 7	Community Centre 7:30 p.m.
Ponoka District	November 4	Mecca Glen School 7:30 p.m.
Ponoka District	November 19	Crestomere School 7:30 p.m.
Raymond	November 5	1:30 p.m.
Red Deer	November 8	Capri Motor Inn 1:00 p.m.
Red Deer district	November 13	Benalta Hall 7:30 p.m.
Red Deer district	November 14	Valley Centre Hall, 1 p.m.
Redwater	November 13	Legion Hall 7 p.m.
Rimbey	November 26	Provincial Building 1:30 p.m.
Rocky Mtn. House	November 21	Provincial Building 7:30 p.m.
Smoky Lake	November 7	Smoky Lake Complex 1:15 p.m.
Standard	November 19	2:00 p.m.
Stettler	November 5	Memorial Hall 1:30 p.m.
Taber	November 15	Pulse Growers
Thorsby	November 6	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Vauxhall	November 4	1:30 p.m.
Vulcan	November 6	7:00 p.m.
Westlock	November 20	Legion Hall 9:00 a.m.
Wetaskiwin	November 6	Moose Hall 1:30 p.m.
Worsley	November 13	Legion Hall 7:30 p.m.

AGRI-NEWS

November 11, 1991

Livestock deferral plan extended to eastern Alberta producers

Producers in east central and northeastern Alberta who had to sell their breeding livestock because of drought conditions in 1991 will benefit from the extension of a federal government tax deferral program.

In designated areas producers will be eligible for a one-year tax deferral on income from drought-induced sales of their breeding stock. These eligible areas are: the counties of Two Hills, St. Paul, Smoky Lake and Athabasca; the municipal districts of Bonnyville and Acadia; Improvement District 18 (south); and, special areas 2, 3 and 4. Eligibility was based on soil moisture and water supply conditions, and forage yields reported to the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation during the 1991 growing season.

"Producers who experienced a drought year in 1991 can defer a portion of their breeding herd sale proceeds until 1992. This is a management tool for producers who are forced to sell livestock because they lacked feed and water supplies for all or part of their herd," says Paul Gervais of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch.

Through the tax deferral program, eligible producers exclude a portion of their sale income for one year. The untaxed proceeds can then be used the following year to replenish their breeding herds.

An extended deferral will also apply to producers who qualified for the program for the second consecutive year in 1991. "Producers who took advantage of the tax deferral in 1990, and again live in a 1991 designated area, can defer 1990 sale income for another year," he says.

Gervais reminds producers that they must request this deferral when they file their 1991 income tax return. They can also contact their district taxation office for information about their eligibility.

Alberta's Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley requested that Bill McKnight, the federal agriculture minister, extend the program to eastern areas of the province. The Income Tax Act requires the federal minister designate an area or areas for the deferral program.

The Drought Induced Sales of Breeding Animals program was originally announced in 1988. It allows eligible producers to defer 30 per cent of sale income if they reduce their breeding herd by at least 15 per cent and less than 30 per cent. They are allowed a 90 per cent deferral if they are forced to sell 30 or more per cent of their breeding herd. Purchases of new stock must be subtracted from total sales.

Breeding animals are defined in the Income Tax Act as bovine cattle, bison, goats and sheep over 12 months of age. Horses older than 12 months kept for breeding in the commercial production of pregnant mare's urine also qualify.

Contact: *Paul Gervais*, *556-4240*; *Ted O'Brien*, *PFRA, Regina*, *(306)780-6000*

This Week

Livestock deferral plan extended to eastern Alberta producers	1
Fill wheat quotas promptly advises analyst	2
Many factors keep hog prices low	2
Slaughter lamb prices holding at year ago levels	2
Mustard has potential for price improvement	3
"Target your market" returns to Camrose	3
Briefs	4
NISA information meetings update	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Fill wheat quotas promptly advises analyst

Wheat prices hit bottom in 1990-91, but the good news is that prices will probably move up and continue to improve into the 1992-93 crop year says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Unless drought in a major wheat producing area turns up, gradual price improvements are likely, but the improvements aren't enough to justify storing wheat into 1992-93," says Charlie Pearson.

"My advice is for producers to follow a quota management strategy that maximizes wheat delivery opportunities and to fill those quotas promptly when they're announced," he adds.

For the current crop year, Pearson says low international wheat prices justify the low 1991-92 Canadian Wheat Board initial payments. However, he says, improvements in both premium and subsidized world international wheat prices should allow room for a $15 to $20 per tonne final payment. The total 1991-92 payment would still be less than the previous year's initial payment.

Developments in the world wheat trade could have a positive effect for Canadian producers. Increased imports by both the Soviet Union and China are likely this year, boosting the world wheat trade by about 12 million tonnes over last year.

"Both Soviet and Chinese production is forecast to have dropped off from their 1990 totals. They will be looking for around six and five million tonnes respectively," Pearson says.

World wheat production (among the five major exporting countries) is expected to be down nine per cent from last year. Reduction in U.S. wheat production was the major factor in the decline.

An extremely tight U.S. wheat supply demand balance caused the U.S. wheat futures market to post major gains during October. December contract Kansas City Board of Trade wheat futures increased to over $3.60 per bushel, a 10 per cent improvement from the beginning of October.

While Pearson predicts some price improvement, he says both the international and Canadian situations make the 1992 wheat outlook cloudy. On the international front, at least three factors could affect prices. Any GATT agricultural deal will likely only reduce subsidies, not remove them. Tight world wheat supplies means prices will be extremely sensitive to weather in the major production regions, and credit terms offered the Soviet Union, rather than the level of export subsidies, may become the major factor in world wheat trade patterns. As well, 1992 U.S. production is likely to increase by 10 per cent because of changes to their farm program.

Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

Many factors keep hog prices low

U.S. inventory estimates and a strong Canadian dollar are two factors that will keep hog prices low says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Low prices have arrived and may be with us for some time to come," says Ron Gietz. "Producers can most likely expect lower average prices in 1992 compared to 1991."

Recent U.S. swine inventory reports show a strong expansion rather than a moderate expansion. This comes on the back of already large increases in U.S. pork production that have driven slaughter hog prices down. Based on large inventories of market hogs of all weights, hog marketings will remain at high levels through the coming fall and winter and continue to exert downward pressure on prices he says.

"The part of the USDA report that is most negative to future price prospects is the estimated large recent farrowing and future farrowing intentions. June to November totals are expected to be eight per cent more than last year, with December to February up seven per cent. As low as prices are now, this report sets the stage for still lower prices in 1992," Gietz says.

Another factor that has shifted the price outlook lower is the continuing trend of a higher Canada/U.S. exchange rate. As the dollar drifts higher, Canadian commodity prices are pressured lower.

Gietz expects average Alberta producer payments for Index 100 hogs at 1.10 per kilogram (dressed) in November, and $1.05 for December and January. Year ago prices were $1.47 for November and slightly lower at $1.40 for December.

A new countervailing duty on live hog exports to the U.S. probably won't have a major impact on the marketplace since the volume of live exports is already low. The new duty will be about $22 Canadian per head, double the previous levy.

Contact: Ron Gietz
427-5376

Slaughter lamb prices holding at year ago levels

A strong Canadian dollar will keep slaughter lamb prices in Alberta at much the same level as they were a year ago says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Prices will probably be in the $49 to $53 per hundredweight range through November and slightly higher in December," says Jo Ann Cmoluch. "And there's the possibility of stronger prices in the first half of 1992."

Tightening lamb supplies in the U.S. will lead to the stronger prices she adds. In the U.S. slaughter lamb prices have ranged between $50 to $55 per hundredweight.

Cont'd on page 3

Cmoluch says one factor that has prevented farm gate prices from recovering from a lengthy price slump is an ever widening margin between prices for retail cuts and the price producers receive. "The problem is serious enough in the United States that a Congressional committee has been struck to examine price differences between wholesale and retail prices."

The trend of a spreading wholesale and retail price gap is also evident in Alberta. Going back to 1987, the percentage difference between the price of railgrade lamb at the Innisfail packing plant and on Edmonton retail shelves was on average 11 per cent for fresh legs of lamb and 34 per cent for loin chops.

"A steady widening of the margin has been occurring, even in the first three quarters of 1991. The percentage difference between the railgrade lamb and fresh retail lamb in Edmonton is now 83 per cent for leg of lamb and 127 per cent for loin chops," she says.

The relatively high retail prices aren't a good sign for lamb producers. "High lamb prices when beef and pork prices are decreasing could be a significant deterrent to consumers, who won't put lamb in their grocery carts," Cmoluch says.

Contact: Jo Ann Cmoluch
427-5387

Mustard has potential for price improvement

Mustard seed holds the most promise of any of the major special crops for a short term price improvement says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Particularly, oriental mustard has potential," says Al Dooley. "Oriental mustard seed prices have already risen one and a half cents since August."

He notes large sales to Bangladesh have provided price support. However, yellow mustard supplies appear to be large enough to prevent prices from rising significantly in the near future.

In other speciality crop markets, the pea market is weaker than it was in 1990. "The yellow pea market is very disappointing and continues to be supported by the feed market. The trade seems extremely negative on prospects for yellows in the foreseeable future. If producers have cash flow concerns, they should consider selling some of their yellows into the feed market," he says.

Increased production in the United States is one reason for the lower prices. Production data from the American Dry Pea and Lentil Association confirms 1991 pea and lentil yields were both well above last year's and the average level. Production was also more than in 1990

"The smaller U.S. crop last year allowed Canadian peas to get a foothold in markets usually dominated by American product," he notes, "so, some of these markets will be competitive this year."

In forage seeds, Dooley says there isn't much possibility of large price increases quickly, but the chance of major declines is also very low. "Selling into rallies is a reasonable marketing strategy," he says. "Unless cash flow problems demand otherwise, consider selling a portion of your crop throughout the season, or set price targets and sell some seed when your target is reached."

Contact: Al Dooley
427-5387

"Target your market" returns to Camrose

Billed as the conference for farmers who want to market, not just sell their products, the third annual "Target your market" returns to Camrose November 27 and 28.

"The fundamental concept in this conference is that no matter what the average product price may be, an effective marketing program will improve farm profit," says David Samm, an Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist in Camrose and one of the conference organizers. "And, the conference emphasizes how to market your 1991 products, exploring any new places you can sell to and any innovative ways you can market."

The two-day conference will address two specific themes in 1991. Day one will have a focus on canola, and day two on diversified products. Both days follow the same format, an opening keynote speaker followed by experts in a particular field.

"We'll open with local cattleman Bob Prestage who will remind participants they can still make a dollar or two in farming, and the rest of the day is devoted to a grain outlook and two canola sessions," says Samm.

Charlie Pearson, Alberta Agriculture market analyst, will provide a cereal grain outlook and marketing plan for 1991. The afternoon will be devoted to canola. First, Erroll Anderson of Palliser Grain, will give his this year's outlook and marketing plan. In a second session, Doug Walkey, Alberta Agriculture regional marketing specialist, will outline how to use the new canola options available from the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange.

Whitefox, Saskatchewan producer Don Lidster, who has produced a series of cassette tapes about winning farm management, will discuss some of the best management techniques for today's farm operator. Lidster will start the second day of the conference. Diversification is on the agenda for the rest of the day. Kicking off the topic is University of Saskatchewan's Red Williams. Six select-a-sessions follow in the afternoon examining alternative livestock, vegetables, alternative grains, forage seeds, herbs and spices, and woody ornamentals and fruit.

Cont'd on page 4

"These sessions will look into diversification ideas, and farmers who attend the conference will be able to talk with producers who have already diversified their farm operations," he says.

Conference registration has been designed to encourage and permit as many people as possible to attend adds Samm. "There's a single registration fee per farm, and lunch packages are optional. As well, we're offering discounts to people who are members of marketing or production clubs."

The conference will be held at the Camrose Regional Exhibition, just east of the city.

For registration and other information, call the Alberta Agriculture Camrose district office at 679-1210.

Contact: David Samm
679-1210

Agri-News briefs

Hold off canola pricing in late fall

Canola prices are likely to face downward pressure in the late fall, so farm managers should hold off pricing their canola during this period says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Heavy deliveries for cash flow reasons and the fact many deferred pricing contracts will end their 90-day pricing period in the late fall will keep pressure on prices in the short term," says Charlie Pearson. January Winnipeg canola futures contract prices are expected to settle in the $265 to $285 per tonne range during the late fall. Assuming a $55 per tonne elevator/crusher basis level, local Alberta cash prices should be in the $210 to $230 per tonne range. For more information, contact Pearson in Edmonton at 427-5386.

Heavy weight cattle dominate slaughter cattle outlook

Heavy cattle have been the plague of the fed cattle market through the summer and fall says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "This was true in both the U.S. and locally," says Ron Gietz. "The cash market was unable to generate any upwards momentum in October because of an abundant supply of undesirable cattle." Heavy cattle increase the total tonnage of beef in the system and are difficult to market at the consumer level. "Today's consumer is searching for smaller, not larger, cuts of meat," notes Gietz. Bids well below $70 per hundredweight for overweight cattle in late October in Alberta indicate that packers consider these heavy animals more of a nuisance than a saleable commodity he adds. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at 427-5376.

WSGA 96th cattlemen's short course and trade fair Dec. 10-12

Looking toward the 21st century is the theme of the 96th annual Western Stock Grower's Association (WSGA) annual convention, cattlemen's short course and stock grower's trade fair. The event will be held in Red Deer December 10 through 12. Among the agenda topics are private property rights and access; re-positioning beef in the consumer's diet; stress reduction in livestock; innovative uses of grass throughout North America; and, a market outlook. Registration and other information is available by contacting Pam Miller at the WSGA office in Calgary at 101, 2116-27 Ave. NE, Calgary, T2E 7A6, call 250-9121 or FAX 250-9122.

Field sprayer calibration video new at all district libraries

Alberta Agriculture district video libraries have a new edition for their shelves. "Field Sprayer Calibration" (VT 743-2) features a simple step-by-step explanation of accurate calibration. The 10-minute presentation was produced by Alberta Agriculture. The video is available for loan from all Alberta Agriculture district offices or, write the Film Library, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Olds College offering education tour to Costa Rica

The international education department at Olds College is organizing a horticultural tour in tropical Costa Rica this winter. The two and half week tour starts February 13 and goes to March 1, and will focus on different aspects of Costa Rica's environment. Participants will observe the many different types of horticultural farms, fern, spice and fruit juice plantations. The educational aspect of the tour will be arranged in conjunction with the Technical Institute of Costa Rica. The tour is co-sponsored by the Consortium for International Education in California. Anyone interested in the tour should contact Geraldine Byrne at 556-8254 or Richard Godfrey at 556-8368.

"South of Rio Grande" marketing conference Nov. 20 in Calgary

The Federal/Provincial Market Development Council is holding a one day conference on Mexico's agri-food marketplace in Calgary on November 20. The "South of the Rio Grande Competing in the Mexican agri-food marketplace" conference will focus on the opportunities Mexico holds for Canadian exporters and how exporters should best take advantage of those opportunities. Conference discussions will cover issues such as: the effects of the recent North American free trade area negotiations; export financing and insurance; recent Mexican reforms and their effect on the agricultural sector; and, the basic how-tos of exporting into the Mexican marketplace. The conference is supported by the Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan governments. The conference will be held at the Chateau Airport Hotel. Reserving a conference spot is required by November 18. For more information, contact Elton Dunk or Deborah Millar at 427-4241 in Edmonton.

Speciality livestock shows in Calgary

The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede will host two speciality shows at the end of November. The poultry and rabbit show runs November 29 through December 1. The Western Heritage Llama and Alpaca show and sale is November 30 and December 1. For more information, contact Keith Marrington in Calgary at 261-0164.

NISA information meetings update

Editor's note: Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) information meetings have been scheduled across the province to assist Alberta farmers with questions they may have about the program and how to apply. Agri-News will continue to update the list of meetings through December. To confirm the date and time of the meeting nearest you, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office or call toll-free 1-800-665-NISA.

TOWN	DATE	LOCATION/TIME
Beaverlodge	November 12	Albright Hall 1:00 p.m
Beiseker	November 27	7:30 p.m.
Claresholm	November 13	Provincial Building 10:00 a.m.
Cluny	November 19	Cluny Hall 9:00 a.m.
Didsbury	November 21	
Drayton Valley	November 19	Provincial Building, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton	November 28	Mayfield Inn
Fairview	November 12	Fine Arts Centre 7:30 p.m.
Falun	November 28	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Fort Macleod	November 13	Scarlett & Gold Inn 2:00 p.m.
Grande Prairie	November 12	Trumpeter Motor Inn 7:00 p.m.
High River	November 19	Highwood Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
High River	November 28	Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
Keephills	November 26	Keephills Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Lethbridge	November 27	Sven Ericksons 1:00 p.m.
Lyalta	November 19	Lyalta Hall 7:00 p.m.
Manning	November 13	I.D.#22 Services Building 7 p.m.
Mayerthorpe	November 27	Legion Hall 1:00 p.m.
Olds	November 14	Olds College Lecture Theatre 8:30 a.m.
Olds	November 18	Olds College Lecture Theatre 1:00 p.m.
Onoway	November 13	Legion Hall 7:00 p.m.
Picture Butte	November 22	1:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 21	7:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 28	Heritage Inn 1:30 p.m.
Ponoka District	November 19	Crestomere School 7:30 p.m.
Red Deer district	November 13	Benalta Hall 7:30 p.m.
Red Deer district	November 14	Valley Centre Hall, 1 p.m.
Redwater	November 13	Legion Hall 7 p.m.
Rimbey	November 26	Provincial Building 1:30 p.m.
Rocky Mtn. House	November 21	Provincial Building 7:30 p.m.
Standard	November 19	2:00 p.m.
Strathmore (tentative)	December 3	1 p.m.
Taber	November 15	Pulse Growers
Westlock	November 20	Legion Hall 9:00 a.m.
Worsley	November 13	Legion Hall 7:30 p.m.

AGRI-NEWS

November 18, 1991

Children teach children in farm safety guide

"Half of the deaths that are found on the farm,
Are mainly the kids that think there's no harm..."

So goes a group poem, "The Harms on Farms", written by a grade four class at Mountain View School that was featured as the winning class entry in the 1991-92 "A Child's Guide to Farm Safety".

"Their poem points out a variety of dangers on the farm and reminds children and parents to take care. It really captures the essence of the prevention message that we want to get across to rural elementary school students who will be using the guide," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program manager.

Farm safety issues are presented in the colorful guide with assistance from winning entries in a province-wide student poster and essay contest. Activities in the guide help show a number of safety rules. The guide encompasses machinery, tools, animals, fire, chemical, electrical and pipeline safety. As well, there is a section on first aid.

"Each safety area has a different type of learning activity, for example there are word scrambles for fire safety, finger puppets for animal safety and hidden pictures for first aid," says Kyeremanteng.

About 40,000 of the activity guides are now available to Alberta school jurisdictions. There is also a supporting teacher's guide and classroom pop-up. School superintendents have been sent order forms for their schools. Orders are handled on a first-come, first-served basis.

"The guide and a unit on farm safety can be incorporated into a number of subject areas, from art by making posters illustrating safety rules through to language arts essays about farm safety," he says.

Teachers can use supporting audio visual material for presenting farm safety information in their classrooms notes Kyeremanteng. Videos and a slide presentation are available through Alberta Agriculture's Film Library (7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H5T6).

The 15th annual guide is centred around the theme of "in search of our heroes". The 21 students whose work is used in the guide are pictured in a "gallery of farm safety heros". Each student will receive a prize during December at their school. (Editor's note: Please see attached list of winners.)

"We're very proud to be able to continue our tradition of using student work in the guide and look forward to the entries for next year's guide," says Kyeremanteng. Individual students and classes are invited to submit entries for next year's guide by June 30, 1992.

Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan and the guide's sponsors, TransAlta Utilities and Nova, will officially launch the guide later this year.

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
427-2186

This Week

Children teach children in farm safety guide	1
Canola marketing alternative allows protection from falling prices	2
Market sends calving season signals	2
Updated publication lists sources of financial and other assistance	3
December workshop examines conservation computer tools	3
Farm women talent bank directory started	4
Briefs	4
NISA information meetings update	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch
Phone: (403) 427-2121

1991-92 Student winners in "A Child's Guide to Farm Safety"

Clancy Fitzgerald, Grade 5	Kennedy Elementary, Grimshaw
Gina Hager, Grade 4	Provost Public School
Dawn Howitt, Grade 1	Milk River Elementary
Angela Hansel, Grade 4	Pipestone School
Jennifer Flanders, Grade 2	Elk Point Elementary
Kurt Reid, Grade 5	Cremona School
Sandan Hansen, Grade 3	Hanna Elementary
Fred Chaschin, Grade 5	Ecole Plamondon
Susan Hagan, Grade 3	Bentley Elementary
Ralaina Virostek, Grade 3	East Rolling Hills School
Sean P. Ferris, Grade 4	East Rolling Hills School
Amanda Berg, Grade 5	Vermilion Elementary
Kristy Storm, Grade 4	Round Hill School
Melinda Hobbs, Grade 6	Kitscoty Elementary
Nairin Bradbury, Grade 5	Deadwood School
Jerry Hofer, Grade 1	Cameron Farms Colony School, Turin
Ryan Bremer, Grade 1	Morrin School
Andrea Hoff, Grade 1	St. Mary School, Whitecourt
Amanda Cottrell, Grade 4	Percy Pegler Elementary, Okotoks
Timmy Miller, Grade 4	Vermilion Elementary
Jody Amundson, Grade 4	Amisk School
Grade 4 (Tom Redd, teacher)	Mountain View School

Canola marketing alternative allows protection from falling prices

This winter canola growers can use a new marketing alternative that allows them to both protect themselves from declining prices and take advantage of price increases.

"Many grain companies are now offering a contract that hasn't been readily available before," says Lee Melvill, Alberta Agriculture regional marketing economist in Fairview. Most companies are calling this option a "floor price" or a "minimum price" contract he adds.

A floor or minimum price contract is a priced contract specifying a certain minimum price for canola for future delivery. A producer who signs a floor or minimum price contract agrees to deliver a specified amount of canola to the grain company during a certain time period. In return, the grain company agrees to pay the producer a guaranteed minimum price when the canola is delivered.

"This type of contract doesn't look much different than the deferred delivery or forward priced contracts many producers already use, however there is an important difference," notes Melvill. "A floor or minimum price contract specifies only a minimum price. If, between the time the contract is signed and the delivery date canola prices rise, the producer has the 'option' of accepting a higher price."

There is one qualification. Producers are able to use their option to select a higher price only once before the canola is actually delivered.

Floor or minimum price contracts can be looked at as a kind of minimum price insurance he says. As with all insurance, there is a fee or premium and grain companies that offer this type of canola contract will charge producers a fee.

The fee is variable. For example, if the minimum contract price is very high, the chance prices will go higher is probably low, so premiums are low. On the other hand, if the minimum contract price is low and the likelihood is for prices to rise, then the premium will likely be high.

Melvill notes some companies require the fee to be paid when the contract is signed, and others plan to include the fee in the contract basis. "In this case, the basis on a minimum price contract will be wider than the basis for a deferred delivery contract on the same day."

The fee won't be established directly by individual companies, but on the floor of the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange when trading canola future options begins. "Buying and selling of canola options will establish an option fee or premium based on how risky the market believes the situation to be," Melvill says.

Contact: Lee Melvill
835-2291

Market sends calving season signals

Marketplace signals are sending Alberta cow calf producers a message about their calving season says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"The two main signals are low premiums for lighter weight cattle in the fall run and the strength of the late winter-early spring market for light grass cattle," says Ron Gietz. He adds this has management implications for market-sensitive producers.

This fall, buyers actively sought large calves weighing 600 pounds plus. "They were looking for calves that can finish out ahead of the typical spring decline in the fed cattle market," he says. "For the producer to capitalize on this trend they have to calve very early to produce large fall calves that are capable of reaching slaughter weight by the following April."

Cont'd on page 3

The second option is to calve very late—late spring or early summer—producing lean grasser cattle for the late winter-early spring market. "This market typically has higher prices than the traditional fall calf market," Gietz says.

Each calving strategy has unique management implications and is best suited to certain types of cattle and certain types of farm operations. "The main point is that these two strategies target a specific product to a specific market in order to achieve the best possible returns," says Gietz. "Before producers make any significant changes they would have to analyze their own situation to ensure a management change would be beneficial to them," he adds.

Contact: Ron Gietz
427-5376

Updated publication lists sources of financial and other assistance

Alberta Agriculture has revised a popular publication that lists sources of financial, counselling, consulting and other assistance.

"Sources of Assistance" is of particular interest to primary producers and food processors says Anita Lunden of the farm business management branch in Olds. "Other businesses that serve farmers, for example accountants or a fertilizer dealer, may also find it useful," she adds.

The booklet includes the services of 25 different federal and provincial government departments, crown corporations and agencies.

Sources of financial assistance, including grants and loans, are divided into categories of disaster, expansion and updating, new ventures, and market research and promotion.

Other categories of assistance listed are: insurance and income stabilization programs; counselling, consulting and information; and, who to call about clarification and enforcement of policies and regulations. The last grouping could include questions about the GST, use of pesticides and exporting goods says Lunden.

Copies of "Sources of Assistance" (Agdex 871-1) are available at Alberta Agriculture district offices, or by writing the department's Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote the Agdex number when ordering.

As well, the updated "Sources" is also on a computer database available on the Remote Bulletin Board System (RBBS). The system is easy to use she says if the producer has a computer and modem. "By using a keyword you can view the programs you may be interested in and transfer that information to your own computer."

For more information about the Sources database or the RBBS, call the farm business management branch in Olds at 556-4220.

Contact: Anita Lunden
556-4240

December workshop examines conservation computer tools

Conservation planning professionals and technicians will have an opportunity to hear about and try several computer expert systems related to soil and water management at a December 12 workshop in Edmonton.

Billed as "computer tools for soil and water conservation" the one-day workshop will feature up to 10 different systems. "The workshop will introduce participants to many computer applications that relate directly or indirectly to soil and water conservation," says Leon Marciak, of Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch.

"These systems are a wave of the future," he adds. "They go beyond using a computer for simple data manipulation to assisting a producer in making management decisions. Specific applications developed to date include soil conservation, water management, crop selection and fertilizer application."

Among the systems that will be explained are: the Canadian Highly Erodible Land Planner (CanHELP) with a wind erosion application and residue worksheet; LANDBASE that uses soil information to make land management recommendations and conservation planning practices; WSIS, a County of Warner based system to develop farm conservation plans; RESMAN, USDA software that estimates crop residue levels; Encyclopedia for Landscape and Land Indexed Evaluations (ELLIE); an Alberta Research Council surface water management program; a TransAlta Utilities tree selection system; and, a crop rotation planner developed at the University of Saskatchewan.

Each system's capabilities will be outlined in a brief presentation and demonstration. Workshop participants will have an opportunity for some hands-on during program breaks. Space for the workshop is limited so registration is encouraged before the December 2 deadline. For registration information, contact Donna Beever in Edmonton at (403)422-4385 or FAX (403)422-0474. Marciak also notes this workshop immediately follows a two day interprovincial soil conservation planning workshop. Sponsors are Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada and the Soil and Water Conservation Society (Alberta chapter).

Contact: Leon Marciak
422-4385

Farm women talent bank directory started

The Alberta Farm Women's Network (AFWN) sees a need for farm women to be more involved and better represented in decision and policy making, so has started a talent bank directory.

A list of capable, interested farm women who are willing to sit on boards, committees, councils and commissions is just one of the ways the talent bank can be used says Faye Mayberry, talent bank directory project co-ordinator.

The project's roots are in the frustration the group has felt about the lack of farm women appointments to various boards in the past. Mayberry, who has been involved with the AFWN since its 1985 inception, says the talent bank directory fills the gap between farm womens' organizations concerns and an often heard "we don't have the names of any women" sentiment from those who make the appointments.

The directory will also be used as a list of resource people available as speakers, for surveys and as media contacts. As well, the directory will help active farm women network with each other.

Farm women interested in adding their names to the directory must fill in a questionnaire. Besides name and address, the questionnaire asks about type of farm, interests, expertise and any other organizational involvement. Participants also indicate how they'd like to be listed in the directory.

Currently the questionnaires are available from district home economists at Alberta Agriculture district offices. The five organizations that fall under the AFWN umbrella—Alberta Womens Institutes, Women of Unifarm, Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture, the National Farmer's Union and the Christian Farmers Federation—also have the questionnaires. Questionnaires are also available by writing the AFWN office at 9623-83 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6C 3A3.

Contact: Faye Mayberry
886-4129

Agri-News briefs

Interim revenue insurance payments in the mail

Nearly 17,000 interim revenue protection insurance cheques have already been mailed to Alberta farmers and another 2,500 cheques will be processed and mailed this week. Those payments will put $125 million in the hands of Alberta producers who signed up for revenue protection. In Alberta the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) has two components, crop insurance and revenue protection. These cheques represent payments for the latter program. "The prompt issuance of these payments will assist producers with fall cash flow," says Shirley McClellan, associate agriculture minister. "With close to a year of experience behind us, we will continue to investigate ways to improve the program so that it better meets the needs of Alberta farmers." Revenue protection premiums are deducted from the interim payments. December 1, 1991 billings will show interest charges on all unpaid premiums. To ensure renewal of contracts in the spring, producers are reminded all outstanding accounts must be paid in full. For more information, contact Glenn Gorrell, general manager of the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation, in Lacombe at 782-4661.

Farm fertilizer program application deadline Jan. 31, 1992

The Alberta Farm Fertilizer Price Protection Plan ended on July 31, but Alberta producers have until January 31, 1992 to apply for program rebates. Fertilizer purchases made up to the July 31, 1991 program deadline are eligible for the rebate. The fertilizer must be completely paid for at the time of application. Producers can take their paid invoices to Alberta Agriculture district offices for assistance in filling out rebate application forms. For more information, contact Lloyd Andruchow in Edmonton at 422-5672.

New "Leadership" titles at Film Library

Two videos from a Saskatchewan-produced community leadership series are now available for loan from the Alberta Agriculture Film Library. "Building Teams" (VT 391-17) points out no group can be effective unless it works as a team. "Reaching Consensus" (VT 391-18) shows the strengths of consensus often outweigh the expediency of other decision-making approaches. The productions are respectively 19 and 13 minutes in length. Both modules come with print materials. For loan information write the Film Library, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Cont'd on page 5

Feeder Association annual convention

The pre-registration deadline for the Feeder Association of Alberta's 18th annual meeting and convention is December 20. The association is meeting at the Westin Hotel in Edmonton on January 31 and February 1. To pre-register, contact Donna at 297-5662 in Calgary. You can also write the association at 911-32 Avenue NE, Calgary, Alberta, T2X 6X6.

4th environmental directory available

The fourth edition of "The Alberta Environmental Directory", listing the more than 350 Alberta Enviornment Network (AEN) member and non-member environmental groups and agencies, is now available. Organizations are listed alphabetically, according to type and by environmental issue or topic. Listings include contact information, the organization's purpose and its activities and services. The directory is an AEN project and was compiled and published by the Pembina Institute in Drayton Valley. The directory is also available on computer disk. For more information contact the Pembina Institute at Box 7558, Drayton Valley, Alberta, T0E 0M0 or telephone (403)542-6272.

NISA information meetings update

Editor's note: Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) information meetings have been scheduled across the province to assist Alberta farmers with questions they may have about the program and how to apply. Agri-News will continue to update the list. To confirm the date and time of the meeting nearest you, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office or call toll-free 1-800-665-NISA.

TOWN	DATE	LOCATION/TIME
Beiseker	November 27	7:30 p.m.
Cluny	November 19	Cluny Hall 9:00 a.m.
Didsbury	November 21	
Drayton Valley	November 19	Provincial Building, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton	November 28	Mayfield Inn
Falun	November 28	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
High River	November 19	Highwood Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
High River	November 28	Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
Keephills	November 26	Keephills Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Lethbridge	November 27	Sven Ericksons 1:00 p.m.
Lyalta	November 19	Lyalta Hall 7:00 p.m.
Mayerthorpe	November 27	Legion Hall 1:00 p.m.
Olds	November 18	Olds College Lecture Theatre 1:00 p.m.
Picture Butte	November 22	1:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 21	7:30 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 28	Heritage Inn 1:30 p.m.
Ponoka District	November 19	Crestomere School 7:30 p.m.
Rimbey	November 26	Provincial Building 1:30 p.m.
Rocky Mtn. House	November 21	Provincial Building 7:30 p.m.
Standard	November 19	2:00 p.m.
Westlock	November 20	Legion Hall 9:00 a.m.

AGRI-NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

November 25, 1991

Fall moisture picture dry

Provincial soil moisture conditions before freeze up were dry again this fall says an Alberta Agriculture soil moisture specialist.

Moisture levels were dry or extremely dry in 82 per cent of the agricultural area of the province says Allan Howard of the conservation and development branch. The assessment is based on actual sampling of stubble fields between October 1 and 24, analysis of rainfall data, and additional information on local variability and changes from district and regional staff between the sampling dates and November 1.

"Over half of the agricultural area in the province, including virtually all of the eastern half of Alberta is extremely dry," he says. This zone extends east to central Saskatchewan and west through north central Alberta to High Prairie and Valleyview. It also includes the western portion of the Peace River region. [Editor's note: See attached soil moisture map.] This very low moisture rating means little or no available water is present in the soil, and if these conditions persist into spring, the risk of crop damage from drought is high.

Low soil moisture levels exist in most of the areas west of Highway 2 he adds. This area has usually been in the medium or high category. A low soil moisture level rating means the soil reservoir is less than half full.

"Conditions this fall were a repeat of 1990," says Howard. "Dry weather from July through October resulted in little or no replenishment of soil moisture reserves." He adds the fall of 1990 was the driest recorded since moisture surveys began in 1982, and this fall was nearly as dry as last year.

The exceptions to the dry conditions are scattered throughout the province. Most of these areas are rated in the medium category with moist subsoil between 45 and 75 cm. These areas include: central and northern portions of the Peace River region; a small area south of Grande Prairie; an area from Mayerthorpe southwest through Edson and Hinton to the Rocky Mountains; and, a portion of central Alberta from Sedgewick west through Rocky Mountain House with a narrow band extending north along Highway 2 to Edmonton.

One small area, northwest of Falher, is rated in the high moisture category.

Howard notes soil moisture levels can increase by 20 to 40 per cent between November 1 and seeding next spring. Overwinter precipitation is the major factor, but its effect also depends on fall moisture levels, local soil and topographic conditions, extent and timing of precipitation, timing of snow melt and the ground thaw period.

"Based on past records, the prospects for moisture recovery over the winter are good for western areas, and not as good for eastern areas or the central Peace region," says Howard. "However, early snowfalls across the province are encouraging, and spring snow and rain can improve soil moisture conditions considerably."

Howard also notes farmers who leave standing stubble on their fields can gain 30 to 50 mm more moisture through trapping snow.

Contact: Allan Howard
381-5861

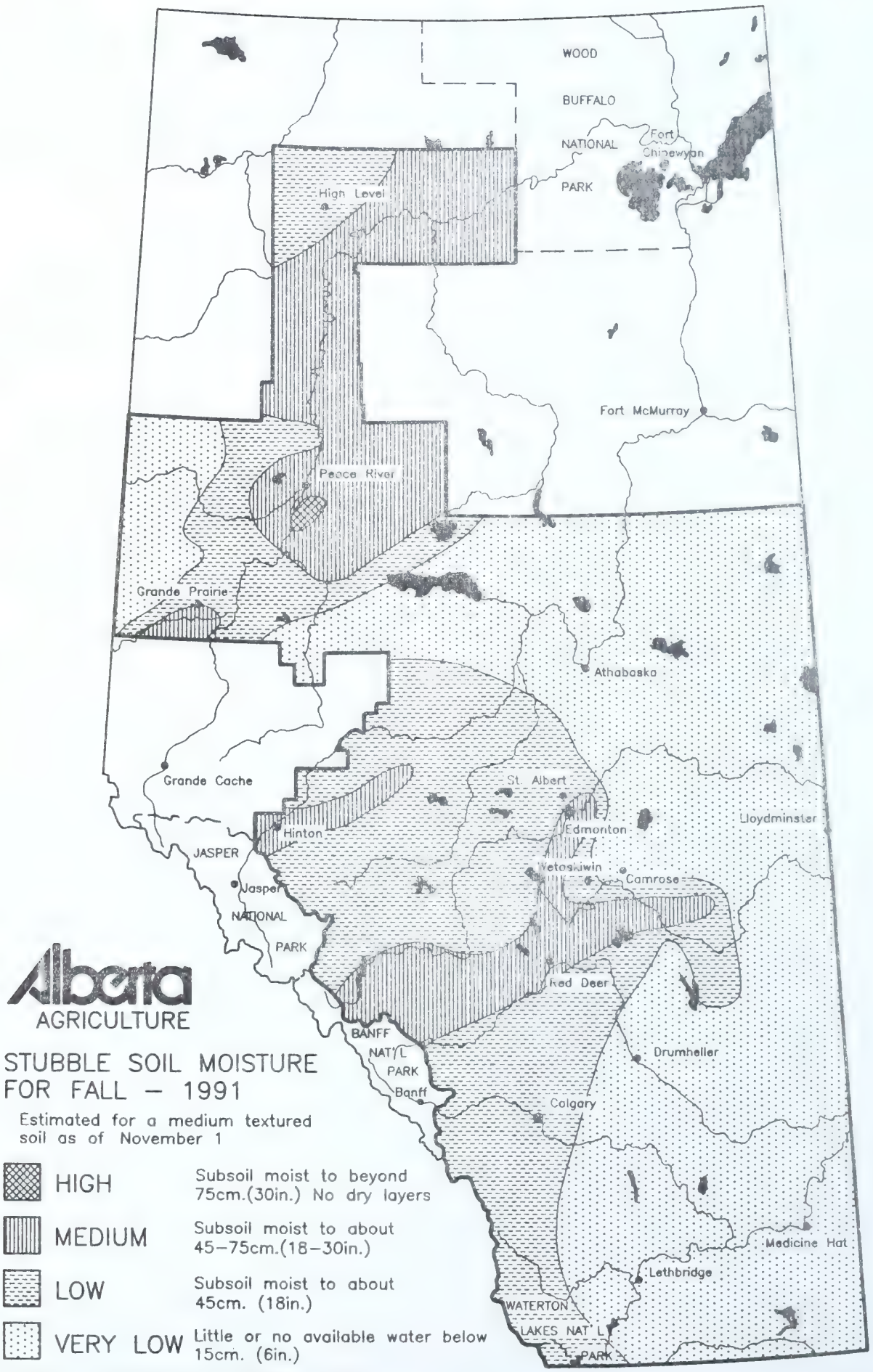
This Week

Fall moisture picture dry	*1*
Initiatives announced to strengthen agriculture	*2*
Country vacation farm diversification option	*3*
Wetlands do cost less	*3*
Top 4-H livestock judges bound for international competitions	*4*
Say "Happy holidays" with festive flowers	*5*
Briefs	*5*
NISA information meetings update	*6*

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121



Alberta
AGRICULTURE

STUBBLE SOIL MOISTURE FOR FALL — 1991

Estimated for a medium textured soil as of November 1

HIGH	Subsoil moist to beyond 75cm.(30in.) No dry layers
MEDIUM	Subsoil moist to about 45–75cm.(18–30in.)
LOW	Subsoil moist to about 45cm. (18in.)
VERY LOW	Little or no available water below 15cm. (6in.)

COMPILED BY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

Initiatives announced to strengthen agriculture

The Alberta government has answered requests from farm organizations for short and long term assistance.

Measures announced on November 14 by Premier Don Getty, Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley and Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan included a comprehensive package for all the province's farmers as well as specific funding for farmers in northeastern Alberta who experienced drought through the growing season.

In total, over $115 million in new funding will be provided over the next 16 months through programs designed both to assist the farm sector in the short term and to support the future development of safety net programs. Combined with the interim Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) payments now in the mail, the package is expected to provide farmers with over $150 million in benefits over the next two months.

"We've talked with farmers and rural business leaders across the province over the past number of months in an effort to understand fully the economic situation they are facing. We had a large meeting on October 18 at Government House with farm leaders. The clear message was they need help," said Getty in the announcement.

"Most of the circumstances are beyond farmers' control—low prices, slow sales and terrible weather conditions. In northeast Alberta, there has been a severe drought and it is critical that we do more. Today, we're moving to provide immediate assistance to those drought stricken farmers and also to give greater certainty to all sectors of the agriculture economy over the longer term," he said

Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan observed decisions taken earlier are now paying off. "The GRIP interim payment currently being issued will put up to $125 million in farmers' hands," said McClellan. "A second interim payment, in the order of $200 million, is expected in March of 1992."

"We recognize that transitional support is needed until the full impact of GRIP is felt by the farming community," said Isley. "This package demonstrates the government's continuing support of agriculture."

A four point plan involving restored and extended programs and additional contributions to the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) was announced by the Premier and ministers.

Effective November 14, the Alberta Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance (AFFDA) was restored to the pre-October 31, 1991 level of 10 cents per litre for diesel and four cents per litre for gasoline. Combined with fuel tax exemptions, farmers receive a full benefit of 19 cents per litre for diesel and 13 cents per litre for gasoline. The cost of the farm fuel initiative is estimated to reach $23.2 million over the next 16 months.

The Alberta Crow Benefit Offset Program will extend beyond the current budget's December 31, 1991 deadline, until March 31, 1993, at the current level of $10 per tonne. The program will be reviewed following consultations scheduled for January of 1992 on the future of the Western Grain Transportation Act. The cost of this extension is estimated to be $54.2 million.

In order to generate an additional $31.5 million for grain and oilseed producers, the province will inject an additional $21 million this year as their one per cent contribution to NISA. This will trigger another 0.5 per cent contribution, or $10.5 million from the federal government. The 1992-93 contribution to NISA will be an additional $12 million and becomes part of the provincial commitment to the long term safety net system.

The Indexed Deferral Loans now offered by the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) will be extended for currently enrolled loans and also opened up to additional borrowers. The cost of this extension is expected to total some $1.8 million in 1992-93.

Isley, who has been fully involved in assessing the needs of drought-plagued farmers in northeastern Alberta, also announced special assistance totalling nearly $3 million for the specified area.

"I am pleased to announce further measures designed to assist producers who have had difficulty in ensuring sufficient water supplies for livestock in the drought area," Isley said. "These programs are in addition to the previous initiatives which provided a reduction in the dugout pumping rates and water hauling assistance."

He added the Emergency Farm Water Supply Assistance Program will compensate producers in northeastern Alberta who undertook short term immediate measures to provide water to livestock, such as trenching from sloughs or shallow lakes, or digging small dugouts. Payments will be based on 50 per cent of costs incurred, up to a maximum of $500 per project to a single farm total of $1,500.

Isley also said the Supplemental Rural Water Development Program will provide financial assistance to producers for the construction of water wells and dugouts to ensure a more long term, stable supply of water for livestock and domestic use.

Payment to individuals will be equivalent to the amount of assistance offered by Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), or one-third of project costs to a maximum of $1,650 per well or dugout. Assistance will also be available for group projects and community pastures in accordance with PFRA requirements.

Details on all of these announcements are available from local district agriculture offices. Information about Indexed Deferral Loans can be obtained from the Agricultural Development Corporation and its loans officers throughout the province.

Contact: *C. Doug Radke*
Assistant deputy minister
427-1957
Brad Klak
Executive assistant Minister's office
427-2137
Maureen Osadchuk
Executive assistant Assoc. minister's office
422-9156

Country vacation farm diversification option

Traditional western hospitality combined with an empty guest room may be a farm family's means to supplement their cash flow and boost local tourism at the same time.

Alberta entrepreneurs are beginning to use their farm homes and facilities to attract people looking for a country vacation or a more unique stop along their holiday trail. Alberta Tourism is encouraging farm families to consider opportunities in the industry, and the province's agriculture minister also endorses the potential of on-farm tourism.

"I think it's something farm families should consider," says Ernie Isley. "Farm families are diversifying their operations in a number of different ways to make their livelihood and way of life more viable. For some that has meant changing crops by moving into specialty crops or market gardens, or trying exotic livestock such as ostriches. Developing a country vacation spot is just another alternative."

One bed and breakfast operator in eastern Alberta agrees with that assessment. "Yes, they're viable because they have been a real success in Europe," says Florence Gannon, one of the owners of Hidden Lake Bed and Breakfast near Vermilion. She adds, though, the piece of advice she'd give to someone going into the business, "is not to go into it wholeheartedly and expect to make a living." And, to make a sideline country vacation operation work she says, "You have to enjoy people, or you can't do it."

Gannon says she and her husband, Frank, have "dabbled" in their farm diversification project for the past five years. Besides the bed and breakfast service, they also offer hiking trails, canoeing, trail riding and a small campsite. She still works full-time off the farm and plans to devote more time to their bed and breakfast when she retires. For now, summer brings guests from around Alberta and other parts of Canada.

The Gannons' marketing efforts have been fairly simple. There are Hidden Lake brochures at an Alberta Tourism centre in Lloydminster and also at the Vermilion Provincial Park. They also listed themselves with Bales and Breakfast. This has brought them visitors, and they expect more when a highway sign appears on the nearby Yellowhead. Word of mouth and repeat guests also fill their business. One of their many return visitors is a polo team from Grande Prairie. The Gannons see that two-adult, nine-horse guest party twice a year.

"Hotels and motels have their place," she says, "but, if you want to go somewhere where people really want to know how you slept, or what you prefer for breakfast, bed and breakfast is the way to go." She adds Canadians need to be educated about bed and breakfasts and farm holidays. To fill the gap, she is thinking about taking a video about country vacations into urban schools.

Currently there are 20 farm and ranch vacations and seven guest ranches listed in Alberta Tourism's accommodation guide. These country vacation spots, often near smaller centres, are scattered around the province from north to south, and east to west. Accommodation can vary, from extra bedrooms in the home to campsites to a separate cabin or guest home. For the country visitor, the farm setting offers many benefits from getting away from the city to experiencing the realities of farm life.

Opening their home for guests is only one of the ways farm families can profit from a tourism diversification. "The ideas are almost endless," says Bud Hryniowski, manager of Alberta Tourism's business services regional office in Edmonton. "Farm tours, day-use picnic areas, a camping area, riding stables, a pig or beef roast, hiking trails, bird watching and cross-country skiing are just some of the ways a farm family could use their farm and or their location as a tourism asset."

A number of agencies can help a farm family take the step into the world of tourism. Consultants in Hryniowski's Edmonton office are one source of help.

The business services unit's seven consultants—five in Edmonton and two in Calgary—offer comprehensive counselling and other assistance to current and prospective tourism operators. Some of those services include: location, market and break-even analysis; establishing financial viability;

co-ordinating government regulation and permit approvals; and, computerized project assistance.

"We're there to point people in the right direction," Hryniowski says. An example is marketing assistance. A tourism zone, the department's vacation planning unit and organizations such as the Country Vacations Association and Bales and Breakfast all could play a role.

Farm families can contact a tourism business consultant closest to them. The Edmonton address is 3rd floor, City Centre Building, 10155-102 Street, T5J 4L6, or, call 427-0778. In Calgary write #750, 999-8th Street S.W., T2R 1J5, or, call 297-5040.

Contact: *Bud Hryniowski* *427-1362* *Neil McNeil* *297-5040*

Wetlands do cost less

When landowners look at their property taxes they often divide the total acres by the bill and assume the average is how much they pay for each acre of their land.

That assumption is wrong, and has led some farmers to clear, drain or cultivate marginal land. "A common sentiment is 'I'm paying $2, $4 or $6 per acre on that land, and I should be getting something from it'," says Len Fullen, a resource planner with Alberta Agriculture.

In fact, each area within a land parcel is assessed according to its productivity for agricultural purposes. "What the farmer pays for wetlands and other native area is really very little. In Alberta the typical tax for these areas is between zero and 50 cents per acre," adds Fullen. Fullen has represented the

Cont'd on page 4

agriculture department on an interdepartmental wetland management policy committee. He says during public meetings about a new provincial wetland policy a loud and clear message came out that clarification or changes were needed so people could better understand both their property assessment and taxes.

While a number of proposals have been made, one way to improve knowledge about assessment is very simple says Larry Collins, manager of rural assessment for Alberta Municipal Affairs' assessment standards branch. "I encourage farmers to go into their municipal office and request a copy of their assessment records.

"Then, look at the details of assessment, particularly for a parcel that may have a number of distinct areas such as a wetland or other native area. They can plainly see on the mapped assessment how each area is rated, its value, and the difference between cultivated and non-cultivated lands. And, if they have any questions, they should talk to the assessor for their municipality."

Leaving wetlands, brush and native pasture as they are will save farmers from increased municipal land taxes he adds. "If farmers are contemplating draining, clearing or breaking land, they should consult their municipality's assessor to see what affect that would have on their property assessment."

A quarter section with 160 acres of arable land might typically be assessed at $212 per acre, making the total assessment $33,920. Typical taxes per acre would be $4.77, says Collins, with the total tax bill coming to $763.

A quarter section with 20 acres of sloughs would have both a lower assessment and lower taxes. The 140 acres would typically be assessed at $195 per acre and the 20 acres covered by sloughs at zero. The total assessment on the quarter section would be $27,300. The typical taxes on the arable land would be about $4.39 per acre, and because the sloughs were assessed at no value, the total taxes would be $614.

"If the farmer decides to drain any wetlands, the assessment and tax bill would both normally go up," says Collins. First, because the farmer no longer has to work around the sloughs, the inconvenience discount for less efficient machinery use would be removed from the arable land assessment. Second, the newly cultivated land would now contribute some value to the assessment, although initially it would be somewhat less productive. Using the previous example, the drained 20 acres might be assessed at $141 per acre increasing the total assessment to $32,500. The taxes per acre for the drained area would be $3.17 per acre, adding another $63 to the total taxes.

Cash strapped farmers with concerns about getting a return from keeping wetlands and other native areas do have options other than cultivating their marginal lands notes Fullen. A number of wildlife agencies as well as the federal government have come up with programs to help farmers maintain native and habitat areas.

"These programs can assist farmers in a number of ways, from providing seed for permanent cover to paying to maintain dense nesting habitat," he says.

Contact: *Len Fullen* *427-5359* *Larry Collins* *427-8962*

Top 4-H livestock judges bound for international competitions

Large hams, greater balance, level udder, straight top-line and smooth muscling are terms Alberta's top 4-H club member judges are comfortable using.

Recently 66 of those 4-Hers were in Edmonton using their livestock judging skills at the fifth annual provincial livestock judging competition. The top 13 judges earned themselves the right to compete at international contests after rating the conformation of beef cattle, sheep, light horses, dairy cattle and swine.

Alana Groeneveld, 16, of the Gladys Beef Club, Blackie, was the overall competition winner. Groeneveld will now take her judging abilities to the Denver Western National Stock Show in January, 1992. The Alberta Canada All Breeds Association (ACABA) sponsors this trip for Alberta's top 4-H judge.

A dozen other 4-Hers, based on total overall points, also were awarded trips to internationaljudging competitions. Eight of them hit the road late last week to compete at the International 4-H Judging Seminar at Agribition. Going to Regina are: Tarolyn Aaserud, 18, 4-H Menagerie, Craigmyle; Jennifer Bateman, 18, Jumping Pound 4-H Beef Club, Cochrane; Tim Bowman, 16, Lakemere Beef, Onoway; Keith Evans, 19, West Carstairs Beef, Carstairs; Tony Mitchell, 18, Kleskun Multi, Sexsmith; Rechelle Sinclair, 17, Mundare Beef, Lamont; Kirk Sorensen, 18, Rainbow Riders Horse, Endiang; and, Allen Thompson, 20, Gladys Beef, Blackie.

As well, next year four other top qualifiers will represent Alberta at the 1992 Western 4-H Round-up Judging Competition. Going to Colorado next fall are: Geoff Hoar, 16, Knee Hill Valley Beef, Innisfail; Denis Kotowich, 16, St. Paul Multi, St. Paul; Gene Raw, 17, Strome Beef, Strome; and, Tammy Young, 16, Camrose Beef, Camrose.

Both of these trips are sponsored by Uniblok Canada, a division of Superior Feeds, in Rockyford.

"The local, regional, provincial and international competitions build confidence in these young people by giving them evaluation, decision making and communication tools to use throughout their lives," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agricultural specialist.

At the provincial competition, judging tips and livestock industry standards are discussed and illustrated by experts before competitors judge classes. Each contestant writes a

Cont'd on page 5

quiz and is judged on written and oral reasons in placing 10 different livestock classes. Competitors qualify for the provincial contest through regional events.

The provincial competition is held during Edmonton Northlands Farmfair and is sponsored by Alberta Treasury Branches in co-operation with the host, Edmonton Northlands.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
427-2541

Say "Happy holidays" with festive flowers

From the Christmas reds of poinsettias to exotic amaryllis blooms, a flowering plant is a unique, colorful and lasting gift.

"Flowering plants not only are a way to add color to the holiday season but to add cheer to winter, especially an early one," says Pam North, horticulturist at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton.

The traditional poinsettia comes in a variety of colors besides the common red. Pink, creamy white and marbled poinsettias are available. "Look for tricolor arrangements. This is a pot with one pink, one cream and one red poinsettia. It's very attractive and colorful. So is the "mumsettia", a pot of white chrysanthemums surrounding a single red poinsettia," she says.

The colorful part of poinsettias are the bracts, or modified leaves. With proper care they can last between two and three months. When buying a poinsettia check for the true flowers, the green and yellow structures in the center of the colorful bracts. "If the true flowers have fallen off, the plant isn't fresh," she says.

But poinsettias, while plentiful during the holiday season aren't a plant shopper's only choice. Other common flowering plants include chrysanthemums, christmas cactus, azaleas and cyclamen. Of those, chrysanthemums offer the most color choices. Available year-round, flowers come in a wide variety of forms and colors. Christmas cactus has flower shades of red, pink and orange. Red, pink and white flowering azaleas are popular at Christmas. Cyclamen's unusual and delicate flowers include shades of pink, red, purple and white.

Another Christmas plant is the amaryllis. "It's the perfect gift plant because it's easy to grow and very showy," says North. Amaryllis is grown from a bulb and is sold individually or in gift boxes containing a bulb, pot and soil. Planting to flowering takes approximately six weeks.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

Agri-News briefs

Prairie Water News *fall issue available*

The fall issue of Prairie Water News is now available at Alberta Agriculture district and regional offices. The newsletter dedicated to protecting and improving rural water supplies debuted this spring. Among the topics in the fall issue are: water requirements for cattle; how provincial governments can help with water questions; dugout water quality concerns in the Peace River region; solar water pumping; dugout site testing; Prairie fish farming; and, what farmers think about their water. The newsletter is a co-operative project of Alberta Agriculture's engineering services branch, the Saskatchewan Research Council, the Saskatchewan Water Corporation and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA). For more information, contact Bob Buchanan in Barrhead at 674-8252.

Alberta round table on environment and economy seeks input

The 24-member Alberta Round Table on Environment and Economy has presented Albertans with a vision and guiding principles for the future and is asking them to review its report that sees sustainable development as a way of life and the environment and the economy as partners. Copies of the report or information about getting involved with five working groups—representing individuals and families, organizations, education, business and industry, and government—are available by contacting the Alberta Round Table Office at the Environment Council of Alberta at 427-5792. This number can be reached toll-free in Alberta through the RITE system.

Cont'd on page 6

Outstanding young farmers named

Farmers from each side of the country were among the recipients of the 1991 W.R. Motherwell award as Canada's outstanding young farmers. The winners were: Casey and Linda Houweling, green house vegetable and hydroponic producers from Delta, B.C.; dairy farmers David and Bonnie Loewith from Lynden, Ontario; and, Doug and Health Hennigar, egg, fruit and vegetable producers, from King's County, Nova Scotia. The Outstanding Young Farmers Recognition Program honors farmers across Canada for their contributions to agriculture, to Canada and to the world. The awards are sponsored by the Canadian Junior Chamber, the Society of Outstanding Farmers of Canada and John Deere Ltd. Among the judging criteria are progress in agriculture career; extent of soil, water and energy conservation practices; crop and livestock production history; financial and management practices; and, contributions to the well-being of the community, province and nation. The annual awards ceremony was in Calgary earlier this month. For more information, contact Terry Sinton in Calgary at 245-7040.

ACC elects new delegates

Nearly one-third of the Alberta Cattle Commission's (ACC) delegate body will be new faces. During recent producer elections 25 new delegates were among the delegates elected to fill 90 regional representative positions. "We are delighted that the ACC will have such a strong infusion of new perspectives and ideas. This will be a real asset in better understanding grassroots concerns, and developing policies to best represent producers' interests in the months ahead," says David Andrews, ACC chairman. Sixty per cent of the producers who cast ballots also voted in favor of a research program at the 45 country meetings held throughout the province. A number of resolutions passed at the meetings will now be presented to the ACC annual general meeting and voted on by the entire delegate body. That general meeting will be in Edmonton December 2 through 4. For more information, contact Andrews in Brooks 362-0378, or Gary Sargent in Calgary at 275-4400.

NISA information meetings update

Editor's note: Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) information meetings have been scheduled across the province to assist Alberta farmers with questions they may have about the program and how to apply. Agri-News will continue to update the list. To confirm the date and time of the meeting nearest you, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office or call toll-free 1-800-665-NISA.

TOWN	DATE	LOCATION/TIME
Dawson Creek	November 29	1 p.m.
Beiseker	November 27	7:30 p.m.
Eaglesham	November 25	7 p.m.
Falun	November 28	Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Fairview	November 27	7 p.m.
Fort St. John	November 29	9 a.m.
Grande Prairie	November 28	7 p.m.
Grande Prairie	December 5	Trumpeter Inn 9 a.m.
High Prairie	November 26	7 p.m.
High River	November 28	Memorial Centre 1:15 p.m.
Keephills	November 26	Keephills Community Hall 7:30 p.m.
Keg River	December 4	7 p.m.
Lethbridge	November 27	Sven Ericksons 1:00 p.m.
Mayerthorpe	November 27	Legion Hall 1:00 p.m.
Manning	December 3	7 p.m.
Nampa	December 2	7 p.m.
Pincher Creek	November 28	Heritage Inn 1:30 p.m.
Rimbey	November 26	Provincial Building 1:30 p.m.
Strathmore	December 2	(tentative) 1 p.m.

AGRI-NEWS

December 2, 1991

DEC 18 1991

Red Deer area has new way to weather forecasts

Red Deer area producers now have even better access to agricultural weather forecast information says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist.

"Early last month Weatheradio Canada begin transmitting its up-to-date farm weather forecast for the Red Deer area " says Peter Dzikowski of the conservation and development branch.

Farmers in the Red Deer area can listen to Weatheradio Canada on 162.550 MHz on the VHF-FM Band. The service is available 24 hours a day with hourly updates as well as weather warnings. The service is owned and operated by Environment Canada's Atmospheric Environment Service.

"The broadcast can't be received by a regular AM/FM radio, so a special weatheradio receiver is needed to receive the broadcast," notes Dzikowski. Weatheradio receivers retail at between $60 and $100. A crystal controlled receiver, with a switch not a dial, is recommended. Also recommended is a receiver with a warning alert feature and a battery back-up power source.

A Weatheradio Canada signal can also be heard within 50 to 70 km of Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge. Since transmission is by line of sight, reception may be poor in low lying areas or behind hills. If the signal is weak, an external antenna may improve reception.

As part of an awareness promotion Alberta Agriculture gave away a Weatheradio receiver during the recent Agri-Trade show in Red Deer. Roger Nelson of Innisfail was the draw's winner.

Weatheradio Canada service in Alberta started in Edmonton in 1980 and expanded to Calgary in 1983 and Lethbridge in June of 1989.

Farmers who don't live within range of Weatheradio can call one of seven regional farm weather lines for current farm weather forecasts. [Please see attached map of both services' areas.]

Alberta's Farm Weather Line, a co-operative service provided by Alberta Agriculture and Environment Canada's Atmospheric Environment Service, is in its seventh year of operation. It brings farmers across the province up-to-date year round agricultural weather forecasts. The Red Deer line was also the most recent addition to this service.

More than 280,000 calls have been made to the seven regional lines during the first 10 months of 1991. The service assists producers in making farming decisions based on agricultural specific weather forecasts.

Updates on the farm weather line are four times daily at 5:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Long distance toll charges apply outside the local calling area. Telephone numbers are: Grande Prairie, 539-7654; Edmonton, 468-9196; Red Deer, 342-7322; Coronation, 57-TEMPS (578-3677); Calgary, 295-1003; Lethbridge, 328-RAIN (328-7246); and, Medicine Hat, 526-6224.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

Cont'd on page 2

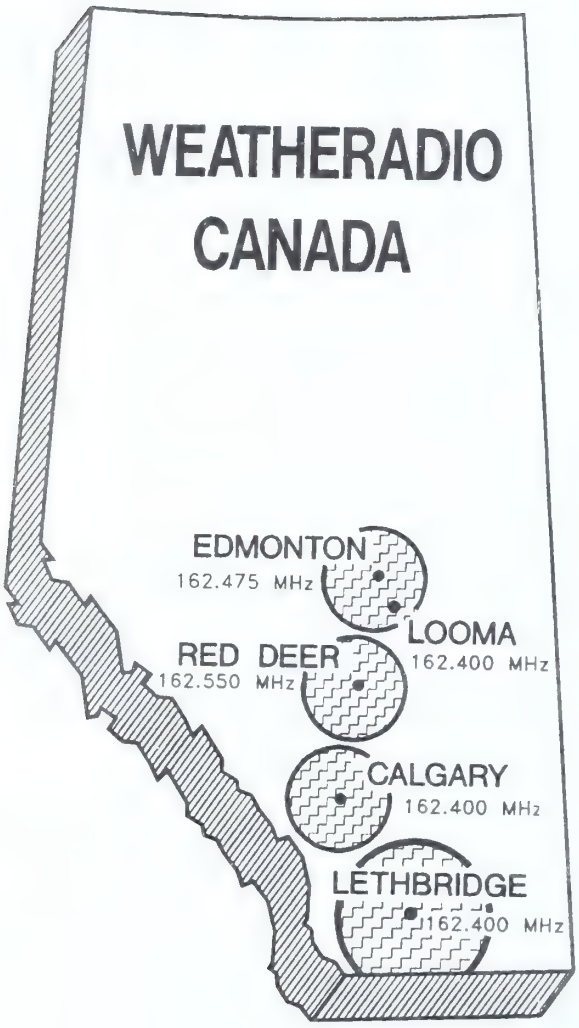
This Week

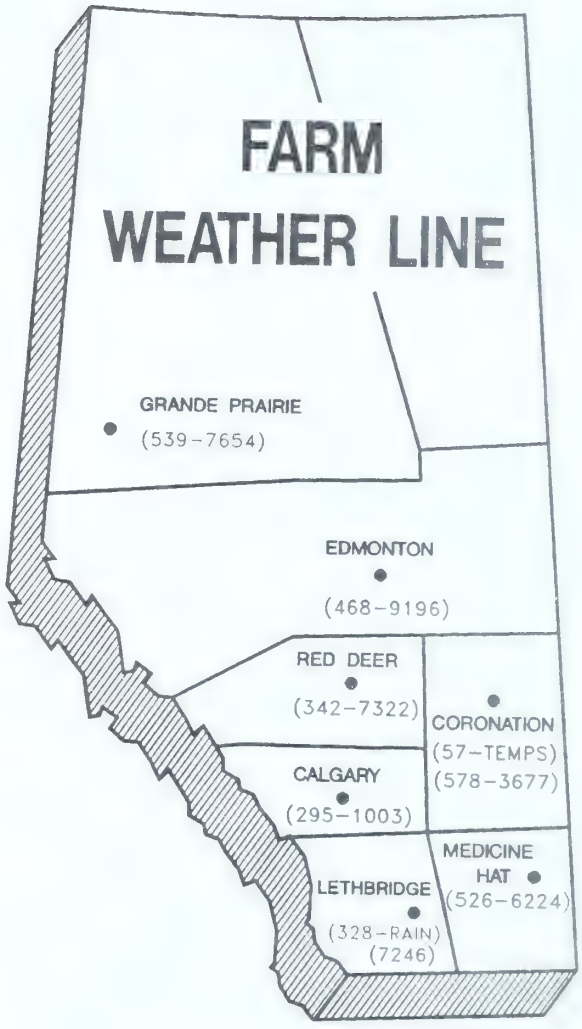
Red Deer has new way to weather forecasts	1
10th annual horse breeders/owners conference returns next month	2
Card makes farm safety gift suggestions	3
Thaw, stuff and store Christmas turkey safely	3
Make fresh choice for your Christmas tree	4
4-Hers post strong showing at international judging competition	4
Editor's note	4
Farm planning is a creative process	5
Briefs	6
Coming agricultural events	7

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121





10th annual horse breeders/owners conference returns next month

The only one of its kind conference in Canada for horse breeders and owners returns to Red Deer January 10 through 12.

"The Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference has established itself as one of the best of its type in North America," says Les Burwash of Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch. The annual conference attracts about 300 people to hear more than 15 internationally recognized veterinarians, researchers and other horse experts discuss their specialities.

Sessions in specific streams for Thoroughbred, Arabian, Quarter Horse owners and breeders are offered, as well as an all breeds program. "However," notes Burwash, "Conference registrants can attend any of sessions regardless of their breed affiliation and will also receive printed materials from all the presentations."

Topics on the conference agenda will cover a wide range of subjects including industry economics, disease, reproduction, animal welfare, conditioning and exporting horses.

Conference sessions will be kicked off with a presentation by Michelle Cameron, 1988 Olympic gold medallist, who will have a motivational message for conference participants.

Cameron is one of the "local" speakers from Alberta at the conference says Bob Coleman, an Alberta Agriculture horse specialist. Another is Muffy Knox, a horse trainer from Keoma, who will discuss tack selection. Knox's speciality is western riding and youth, amateur and novice riders.

Also from the Calgary area is Pete Fraser of High River, a breeder, respected judge and executive member of the world American Paint Horse Association. Fraser will discuss ethics in the horse industry. "His particular focus will be on

Cont'd on page 3

competition, but he doesn't ignore any other aspects of the industry," says Coleman.

As well, the horse industry branch's Burwash will look at the genetics of horse color. "Les has a computer program he will use to work out examples such as what the offspring of a bay mare bred to a Palomino stallion might look like," says Coleman.

The conference is conducted by Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch, the Alberta Arabians Horse Breeders Association, the Alberta Quarter Horse Breeders Group and the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society (Alberta Division) with support from MSD Agvet, United Farmers of Alberta, Upjohn Animal Health, Ralston Purina and the Horse Publications Group.

For registration and other conference information, contact either the horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650 or in Edmonton at 427-6361.

Contact: *Les Burwash* *297-6650* *Bob Coleman* *427-6361*

Card makes farm safety gift suggestions

While you're making a Christmas list and checking it twice, you might want to consider giving a useful and "safe" gift to your favorite people this Christmas.

Alberta farm families can take advantage of a special gift list guide. Sponsors Transalta Utilities and NOVA have made a card with a number of "farm safety Christmas gift suggestions" available for farm families says Solomon Kyeremanteng, Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program manager.

The back of the colorful card has a "wreath" of gift suggestions. They range through stocking stuffer items such as safety scissors for children, a flashlight, gloves and apron for pesticide safety, and emergency candles, to larger items such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and batteries, and a reflective blanket for a vehicle.

"This is a new approach to a safety message, not the traditional 'preachy' sort of message," says Kyeremanteng. "It's a holiday reminder to do something special for the people you love. When's the last time Dad got a first aid kit for Christmas? It might be more useful than another tie.

"As well, when the farm community is facing tight Christmas budgets, presents like this also make good sense."

The cards are available on a first-come, first-served basis by calling the farm safety program office in Edmonton at 427-2186. There's a limit of one per family.

Contact: *Solomon Kyeremanteng* *427-2186*

Thaw, stuff and store Christmas turkey safely

Your kitchen may be the weakest link in the food safety chain, and one of the times when cooks should take special care is with their Christmas turkey says an Alberta Agriculture food specialist.

"There are a lot of food poisoning hazards if you don't thaw, stuff, cook or store turkey properly," says Linda St. Onge of the home economics branch. "So to keep everyone's holiday dining experience pleasurable, follow some simple rules in preparing your turkey."

St. Onge says there are four safe ways to thaw a turkey. The bird can be thawed in the refrigerator, placing the turkey on a tray to catch water. Allow about 10 hours per kilogram of meat for thawing. Thawing is also safe in cold water if the turkey is put in a water tight bag or container, she says. Allow two hours per kilogram for complete thawing. A turkey can also be thawed in the microwave, using the manufacturer's instructions.

"You can also thaw your turkey at room temperature if you follow special precautions. Insulate the turkey in a tightly closed heavy brown paper bag or with a thick layer of newspaper or towels. An insulated, covered cooler also works. This insulation allow the turkey to thaw at a cold enough temperature to maintain food safety," she says. With this method, allow three hours per kilogram for thawing.

Two other tips on thawing are: keep the frozen turkey in its original plastic wrap with any of the thawing methods; and, once the turkey is thawed, keep it refrigerated and cook within 48 hours.

The next step is stuffing the turkey, and stuffing can cause problems if not properly handled. "Stuffing should be cooked separately from the bird for maximum safety. Because warm stuffing creates an ideal environment for bacterial growth, its presence in the bird can be hazardous before, during and after the turkey is cooked," she says.

If stuffing is cooked in a separate casserole dish, add extra liquid so it will be moist enough to stick together. Add 25 millilitres (ml) [two tablespoons] of liquid for each 250 to 375 ml (one to one and a half cups) of dressing. Removing some of the juices from the turkey's roasting pan is a good choice she says. The casserole stuffing should be cooked in the oven for the last half hour of roasting time.

On the other hand, if you prefer to stick with the traditionally stuffed bird, St. Onge has some advice. "Remember stuffing can only be done safely just before the turkey is popped into the oven. Never stuff a turkey the night before roasting or before freezing the bird."

Once the turkey is cooked, immediately remove all the stuffing. If stuffing isn't removed it may stay warm long enough for bacteria to contaminate the leftover turkey and stuffing. Leftover stuffing must be refrigerated and used within three days.

Cont'd on page 4

The best roasting temperature is 325°F(160°C). Higher temperatures cause protein toughening and shrinkage. Lower temperatures aren't recommended because naturally present bacteria might not be killed.

"Once the turkey has started roasting it must be completely cooked before removing from the oven," St. Onge says. The turkey can be covered with a loose tent of aluminum foil. During the last half hour of cooking, remove foil to baste and allow the bird to brown.

The most reliable way to test "doneness" is with a meat thermometer. An internal thigh muscle temperature of 185°F (85°C) indicates the turkey is cooked. The internal temperature of stuffing should be at least 165°F (74°C). After cooking, keep the turkey hot, above 140° F (60°C) or refrigerate at below 40°F (4°C). The turkey shouldn't be left at room temperature for longer than two hours.

Contact: Linda St. Onge
427-2412

Make fresh choice for your Christmas tree

Making your Christmas tree last through the holiday season starts by selecting a fresh tree says an Alberta Agriculture horticulturist.

"Run your fingers over the branches to make sure needles aren't brittle," advises Pam North of the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre.

Another buying tip is shaking the tree she adds. "Only a few needles will fall from a fresh tree that's shaken lightly."

Different types of trees will also make a difference to how many needles end up under the tree. Scots pine is the most resistant to drying and dropping needles. White pine, Douglas fir and balsam fir also retain needles well. Spruce shed their needles more quickly.

Tree care, especially water, is also a big factor in how fresh a Christmas tree stays. "It starts when you bring your tree home," says North. First, cut off the bottom three centimetres of the trunk. This removes resin that can clog water conducting tissues and prevent water absorption. Then place the tree in water immediately.

Tree stands should hold about a litre of water. "The container should be kept full and not allowed to dry out," she advises. "Water useage will be greatest during the first three days, so watch the water level." She adds the warmer and drier the house, the more moisture a tree will lose. As well, larger trees will use more water. Location in the home can also play a role in how the tree keeps. "If the tree is near or over a heat register, the needles will lose moisture faster and fall off. For that reason, those locations should be avoided," she says.

Contact: Pam North
422-1789

4-Hers post strong showing at international judging competition

With a one, two, three finish in the beef classes an Alberta 4-H judging team showed their expertise in one of their province's best known products at an international competition in Regina.

Keith Evans of Carstairs, Tony Mitchell of Sexsmith and Allen Thompson of High River swept the first three placings in the beef portion of the judging seminar at the recent Canadian Western Agribition. The trio also placed in the top ten in the individual aggregate standings with Evans seventh, Mitchell eighth and Thompson 10th.

Mitchell, by virtue of his first place assessment of the beef bull class, also won a Canadian Charolais Association award of complete registration to a week-long beef improvement course at the University of Guelph in May 1992.

The only other team member to place in the top five of any of the classes was Kirk Sorenson of Endiang, who was second in oral reasons.

"The beef classes were definitely where our team had its best results, but the team still posted a strong performance in the overall competition," says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H livestock specialist.

Other team members were Tarolyn Aaserud of Craigmyle, Jennifer Bateman of Cochrane, Tim Bowman of Onoway and Rechelle Sinclair of Lamont. Team coaches and chaperons were Rhonda Clarke, regional 4-H specialist in Barrhead, and 4-H leader Barry McCarthy of Vegreville.

The Albertans competed against 4-H teams from across Canada as well as Montana. They judged swine, sheep, dairy cattle, beef cattle and horse classes presenting written and oral reasons for their placings.

Alberta team members earned their trips during a recent provincial judging competition held during Farmfair'91 in Edmonton. The team's trip to Regina was sponsored by Uniblok Canada, a division of Superior Feeds, in Rockyford.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
427-2541

Editor's Note

The next article is the first in a seven-part series on farm business management planning. The series deals with some of the factors farmers and farm managers should consider in developing their own farm business management plans.

Editors and news directors please note: ideally the series should run sequentially from part one to seven. If space or scheduling become a problem, each article can stand alone. If not used as a series, some articles may require minor editing.

Topics covered over the seven weeks are: farm planning as a creative process; procedures in planning; economic principles;

Cont'd on page 5

making production decisions; fertilizer economics; early planning; and, maximizing profits.

Also please note that this series is not a separate publication. Separate farm planning publications are available on this subject and are mentioned in this series. As well, this series promotes Gear Up Advantage farm planning courses available through Alberta Agriculture district offices.

Farm planning is a creative process

(First in a seven-part series)

Although it sounds simple, obvious and is a cornerstone of making any farm or ranch operation successful, planning is sometimes ignored says an Alberta Agriculture farm management economist.

"Planning is the foundation for all important farming activities," says Craig Edwards, of the farm business management branch in Olds. "And yet, many people don't appreciate what planning can do for them.

"Many farmers aren't aware of the study or discipline of farm business management, so they don't realize that important principles, tools and methods are available to help them make choices and decisions with the highest probability of success."

Edwards adds planning isn't a dull, stodgy exercise in futility, but an important and lively part of management. "At its best, it requires the highest degree of creativity from the manager and other contributors to the process. Innovative and entrepreneurial skills can contribute by discovery of opportunities which can be included in the alternatives considered for the farm business."

Planning is the most basic business management function. Essentially, farm planning involves making choices and decisions, or selecting the most profitable alternative from all considered alternatives. And most farm businesses, says the specialist, could benefit from better farm planning.

"The important ingredient is not the plan, but the planning process—informed thinking and decision making using established economic principles. The planning process provides a systematic and organized procedure that simplifies making choices and decisions," Edwards says.

Planning is deciding on a course of action, and then taking action, or doing what was planned. This requires acquiring and organizing the necessary resources, including financing and human resources, to put the plan into operation. It also includes organizing resources with the aim of producing crops, livestock and livestock products that will have the highest probability of maximizing profits, if that is the farmer's goal.

Even the best planning methods skilfully applied can't guarantee success, he adds, but planning improves the probability of achieving success.

The best way for farmers to learn how to plan is to participate in a course such as Gear Up Advantage he says. Farmers should check with their local Alberta Agriculture district office to register for the course. Another way to learn planning methods is to study a good farm management text book, or even a business text.

"Using recommended planning tools and methods is a continuous process, not something to do on a stormy day and then forget. The plan itself changes as the manager/planner gets new information from continuous observation and analysis as the plan is implemented," he says.

Planning should be done by everyone affected by the plan, not just the manager. "On the family farm, if all the members and employees take part and contribute to the planning, the attitude, behavior and understanding of the group will benefit," says Edwards. "This presents an opportunity to learn the planning process from the skills of the leader, or manager, for better management in the future. Management skills as well as production skills can be learned from experienced members of the farm family."

Farmers unable to attend a course can send for two publications useful in planning. They are "Gauge: A Year End Financial Package" and "Farm Financial Planning Worksheets", a planning guide for the next year. Farmers interested in these farm planning packages should contact Edwards by writing the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0, or calling 556-4248.

Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

Agri-News briefs

NISA infomration meetings update

Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) information meetings have been held across the province to assist Alberta farmers with questions they may have about the program and how to apply. The NISA application deadline is December 31, 1991. Some meetings are still scheduled. They are: Grande Prairie, December 5, Trumpeter Inn 9 a.m.; Keg River, December 4, Keg River Hall, 7 p.m.; Manning, December 3, Elks Hall 7 p.m.; Nampa, December 2, Legion Hall, 7 p.m.; and Strathmore, December 2 (tentative), 1 p.m. To confirm the date and time of the meeting nearest you, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office or call toll-free 1-800-665-NISA.

Draft horse judging seminar Dec. 6-7

Current and potential judges as well as anyone else interested in draft horses can attend a draft horse judging seminar December 6 and 7 in Olds. The seminar includes both halter and hitch classes with an opportunity to judge three heavy horse breeds. The seminar starts on the Friday evening with lectures from 7 to 10 p.m. Hands-on work is from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Olds College arena. Instructors are Bruce Roy of Cremona and Ed Freitag of Alameda, Saskatchewan. Both are respected breeders and judges. The cost per person is $35. The seminar is sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch and the Alberta Percheron Club. For more information, contact Bob Coleman in Edmonton at 427-6361.

Farmfair continues economic catalyst role

Nearly $800,000 traded hands in 14 different livestock auction sales during Farmfair'91 in Edmonton. Participants in 40 separate shows and sales hailed from across Canada and the United States. As well, international guests and buying delegations came from the U.S., Japan, Australia, Chile, Argentina, Germany, Czechoslavakia, Scotland, Mexico, England, Wales and South Africa. Among the highlights at Farmfair'91 were the feature breed Maine Anjou show and sale; the $59,000 prize package for the grand champion Black Angus bull; estimated record attendance during Farmfair; the first ever Farmfair sale of Piedmontese; and, the best-ever quarter horse sale with average prices up by more than $900. Events included a poultry and rabbit show, Western art show, Farmer's Market, provincial draft horse pulling championship, kids coop and corral day, 4-H provincial judging competition, and dairy, beef and swine shows. The 1992 Farmfair is scheduled for November 6 through 14. For more information, contact Mel Minchau or Elaine Emerson at 471-7293.

Tour planned for World Sheep and Wool Congress

The Canadian Sheep Breeders' Association and the American Sheep industry have organized an official North American tour to the third World Sheep and Wool Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina from August 9 to 16, 1992. As well as the congress workshops and technical sessions, the tour will include the 106th Palermo Show. The tour begins on August 1 with return dates of either August 15 or 19. A small reduction in the registration fee will be available before December 15. For more information, contact Norma Dunn, tour co-ordinator in Calgary at (403)289-7337.

Coming agricultural events

Alberta Cattle Commission annual general meeting
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton . . . . . December 2-4
Ron Glaser – 275-4400 – Calgary

Alberta Pulse Growers Commission annual meeting
Convention Inn South
Edmonton . . . . . December 4-6
Eric Horton – 327-0626 – Lethbridge

Hog Days'91
Keystone Centre
Brandon, Manitoba . . . . . December 4-5
Brian Cotton – (204)726-6357 – Brandon, Manitoba

Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association annual meeting and trade show
Banff Springs Hotel
Banff . . . . . December 4-7
Nigel Bowles – 489-1991 – Edmonton

Conservation leadership skills program (presented by Conservation 2000 and CASCI)
Goldeye Centre
Nordegg, Alberta . . . . . December 4-6
JoAnne Meents – 290-4648 – Calgary;
Russ Horvey – 422-4385 – Edmonton

Canadian Farm and Industrial Equipment Institute
Bristol Place Hotel
Rexdale, Ontario . . . . . December 5
CFIEI office – (416)632-8483 – Burlington, Ontario

1991 Alberta Sheep Symposium
The Lodge at Kananaskis
Kananaskis Village . . . . . December 5-7
Wray Whitmore – 427-5083 – Edmonton

Western Stock Growers' Association 96th annual convention and short course
Capri Centre
Red Deer . . . . . December 10-12
Pam Miller – 250-9121 – Calgary

Automated Agriculture for the 21st Century
Hyatt Regency Chicago Illinois Centre
Chicago, Illinois . . . . . December 16-17
American Society of Agricultural Engineers
– (616)429-0300 – St. Joseph, Michigan

1992

Unifarm annual meeting
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton . . . . . January 6-9
Shirley Dyck – 451-5912 – Edmonton

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer . . . . . January 10-13
Les Burwash – 297-6650 – Calgary

Provincial Soil Conservation Workshop and Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) 14th annual meeting
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton . . . . . January 13-15
Peter Gamache – 422-4385; Russ Evans – 936-5306 – Calgary

Cattlemen's Corral (seminars, displays and commercial exhibits)
Saskatchewan Building, Lloydminster Exhibition Grounds
Lloydminster . . . . . January 15-16
Harry Brook – 871-6460 – Lloydminster

Canada West Equipment Dealers Association convention and general meeting
Westin Hotel
Calgary . . . . . January 16-18
William Lipsey – 250-7581 – Calgary

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association 20th annual convention and trade fair: "Cattle feeding and the next generation"
Marlborough Inn
Calgary . . . . . January 16-18
Don Saynor/Marcel Morin – 250-2509 – Calgary

Alberta Canola Producers Commission annual convention
Hilton Hotel
Edmonton . . . . . January 22-24
Nellie Waschuk – 452-6487 – Edmonton

Banff Pork Seminar
Banff Springs Hotel
Banff . . . . . January 22-24
Judy Carss – 492-2343 – Edmonton

International Poultry trade show
Atlanta, Georgia . . . . . January 22-24
Southeastern Poultry & Egg Association – (404)-377-6465 – Decatur, Georgia

7th Alberta Cow Calf Association annual convention
Cedar Park Inn
Edmonton . . . . . January 24
Alban Bugej – 724-2296 – Elk Point

Canadian Bull Congress
Camrose Exhibition Centre
Camrose . . . . . January 24-25
Gordon Porteous – 672-3640 – Camrose

Canadian Produce Marketing Association
Congress Centre
Ottawa, Ontario . . . . . January 24-27
Ronna Reddick – (613)226-4187 – Ottawa, Ontario

Western regional conference of the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD)
Westin Hotel
Calgary . . . . . January 31
Bryan Walton – 435-8823

18th annual Feeder Associations of Alberta meeting and convention
Westin Hotel
Edmonton . . . . . January 31 - February 1
Donna – 297-5662 – Calgary

Alberta Dairymen's Association 84th dairy convention and 71st annual meeting
Convention Inn South
Edmonton . . . . . February 3-5
Bette Petersen – 455-5164 – Edmonton

Production for the '90s seminar
Lethbridge Lodge, Lethbridge . . . . . February 5
Medicine Hat Lodge, Medicine Hat . . . . . February 6
Jim Hahn – 382-3406 – Lethbridge;
Laurence Nicholson – 527-6600 – Medicine Hat

12th provincial Rural Crime Watch Workshop
Hanna Community Centre
Hanna . . . . . February 7-8
Dave Cattanach – 854-2435 – Hanna

"Celebrating yourself and others": a professional development weekend for farm women
Green Gables Inn
Canmore . . . . . February 7-8
Lynne Nieman – 998-0190 – Fort Saskatchewan

National Mastitis Council annual meeting
Arlington, Virginia . . . . . February 10-12
Anne Saeman – (703)243-8268 – Arlington, Virginia

Prairie Potato Council
Delta Inn
Winnipeg, Manitoba . . . . . February 13-15
Merv Pritchard – (204)474-6096 – Winnipeg, Manitoba

Alberta Holstein Association annual meeting
Westlock Inn
Westlock . . . . . February 14
Lori Kamps – 782-3957 – Lacombe

Horse judging clinics
Olds College
Halter horses and conformation . . . . . February 15
Western classes . . . . . March 7
English classes . . . . . March 14
Bob Coleman – 427-6361 – Edmonton;
Jim Freeman – 556-8367 – Olds

Association of Alberta Agricultural Societies annual convention and quilt finals competition
Fantasyland Hotel /West Edmonton Mall
Edmonton . . . . . February 14-16
Eve Cockle – 427-2174

International Livestock Congress
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo
Houston, Texas . . . . . February 17-18
Bob Coleman – 427-6361 – Edmonton;
Pat Lee – (409)845-3808 – College Station, Texas

60th Farm and Home Week
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan . . . . . February 17-21
Bruce Hobin – (306)966-5551 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Decision with Vision (farm women) conference
Glenmore Inn
Calgary . . . . . February 20
Maureen Bolen – 934-3355 – Strathmore;
Kathy Lowther – 948-8551 – Airdrie

Canadian Federation of Agriculture
Waterfront Centre Hotel
Vancouver, B.C. . . . . February 24-26
Burnadette Cox – (613)236-3633 – Ottawa, Ontario

The International Agri & Ranch tradeshow
Stampede Park, Round-up Centre
Calgary . . . . . March 4-6
Al Batiuk – 469-2400 – Edmonton

AgExpo
Lethbridge and district exhibition
Lethbridge . . . . . March 4-7
Paulette Reid – 328-4491 – Lethbridge

Managing Agriculture for Profit
The Lodge at Kananaskis
Kananaskis Village . . . . . March 1-4
Trish Pannell – 556-4240 – Olds

Canadian Horticultural Council
Westin Hotel
Ottawa, Ontario . . . . . March 7-11
Ronna Reddick – (613)226-4187 – Ottawa, Ontario

Agriculture Links Up with Space, 2nd annual international conference
Camrose Exhibition Centre
Camrose . . . . . March 8-10
Gordon Porteous – 672-3640 – Camrose

Agriculture Week
Alberta . . . . . March 8-14
Bard Haddrell – 427-2127 – Edmonton

10th Western Canadian Dairy Seminar
Black Knight Inn
Red Deer . . . . . March 10-13
John Kennelly – 492-2133 – Edmonton

Peace Country Class Agri-Show
Evergreen Park
Grande Prairie . . . . . March 12-14
John Fraser – 532-3279 – Grande Prairie

The Little Royal—Lakeland College open house
Vermilion campus, Lakeland College
Vermilion . . . . . March 20-22
Cathi Bishop – 853-8528 – Vermilion

25th anniversary Canola Council of Canada: An industry's celebration
Winnipeg, Manitoba . . . . . March 23-25
Canola Council of Canada – (209)944-9494 – Winnipeg, Manitoba

International Sulphur Markets-Today and Tommorrow
Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City Hotel
Washington, D.C., U.S.A. . . . . April 1-3
The Sulphur Institute – (202)-331-9660 – Washington, D.C.

National Soil Conservation Week
. . . . . April 13-19
Barb Shackel – 422-4385 – Edmonton

Feeders' Day 1992: "Dairy day"
Dairy research unit, University of Alberta farm
Edmonton . . . . . May 28
John Kennelly – 492-2133 – Edmonton

Alberta Pork Congress
Westerner Exposition
Red Deer . . . . . June 9-11
Pat Kennedy – 340-5307 – Red Deer

Beef Congress
Westerner Exposition
Red Deer . . . . . June 16-18
Pat Kennedy – 347-4491 – Red Deer

Appli-Tech'92: "Agricultural chemical application technology for the '90s"
Western Canada Farm Progress Show
Regina, Saskatchewan . . . . . June 17-19
Bruce Hobin – (306)-966-5551 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Canadian Agricultural Extension Council annual meeting
Fredericton, New Brunswick . . . . . June 21-23
John Tackaberry – 427-2409 – Edmonton

Agricultural Institute of Canada annual conference: "The family farm in the 21st century"
University of Brandon
Brandon, Manitoba . . . . . July 5-9
Red Forbes – (204)727-9702 – Brandon, Manitoba

Roots of Plant Nutrition conference
Chancellor Hotel and Convention Centre
Champaign, Illinois . . . . . July 8-10
Dr. Terry Roberts – 345-4460 – Coaldale

First Canadian Master Gardeners conference
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan . . . . . July 26-29
Bruce Hobin – (306)966-5551 – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

International Symposium on Agricultural Techniques in Cold Regions II (ISAAC II)
University of Alberta
Edmonton . . . . . August 4-7
David Chanasyk – 492-3242 – Edmonton

3rd World Sheep and Wool Congress
Plaza Hotel
Buenos Aires, Argentina . . . . . August 9-16
Norma Dunn – 289-7337 – Calgary;
Peggy Newman – 652-7563 – Blackie

Note: Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed in the "Coming Agricultural Events" list. A list of agricultural society fairs was compiled by the community and rural services branch and is available by writing the Alberta Agricultural Publications Office at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.

Coming agricultural events

- Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in **March, April, May or later in 1992?** Are there any events omitted in the attached list?

- Please state the name of the event.

- What are the dates?

- Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

- Please give the **name, city** or **town**, and **phone number** of a contact person for each event listed.

- This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by February 20, 1992 to:

Agri-News Editor
Print Media Branch
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming Agricultural Events is published four times a year in Agri-News. The next edition will be printed March 2, 1992)

AGRI-NEWS

December 9, 1991

Stored grain insect alert

Stored grain insects aren't a major problem in Alberta right now, but increased infestations elsewhere on the Prairies should alert farmers here to look at their grain says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Infestations are up about one-third in the West this year," says Mike Dolinski, head of entomology and rat control in the crop protection branch. "At this time, we're suggesting Alberta grain producers be aware of the incidence of stored grain insects and check their grain regularly."

The Canadian Grain Commission reports Alberta infestations are about average so far this year, while figures are up for Saskatchewan and Manitoba grain.

The most prevalent pest on the Prairies is the flat rusty grain beetle, a reddish brown insect with long, threadlike antennae. Adults, at 2 mm in length, are visible, however, their worm-like cream colored larvae are almost impossible to detect without special equipment. A wide variety of other beetles, weevils, moths, mites and molds can infest stored grain.

Chris Van Natto, the commission's entomologist, says producers who store their grain for long periods in poorly equipped bins or tanks, or who leave grain piled in a field may unknowingly create a major infestation.

While prevention is easier and less costly than treatment, at this time of the season producers can only detect and eliminate any infestations he says. Because the insects are so small, they are difficult to see, so producers have to look for other signs such as hollowed out grain kernels or kernels lacking a germ end. Bin "hot spots" also indicate problems. High grain temperatures attract insects and infestations can cause grain to heat.

If producers suspect an infestation, but can't find any insects or can't identify them, they can send a grain sample to the commission for a free test notes Van Natto. A one kilogram sample in a well-sealed plastic bag can be sent to: Entomology, Canadian Grain Commission, 800, 269 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 1B2.

"Producers can also contact their district agriculturist or municipal fieldman for assistance in identifying insects they find in their grain," says Dolinski.

Treatment is difficult in the winter. Fumigation with phosphine is effective when the grain temperature is above 10°C. "Obviously that's not going to happen very often during an Alberta winter," says Dolinski. But, he adds, there are other options.

During the winter, rapidly cooling grain to -7°C and keeping it there for six weeks is the recommended option. Less time is required if the grain is colder. This can be accomplished by aeration or transferring grain from one bin to another in cold weather. Aeration systems are recommended for storage facilities with capacities of 40 tonnes or more.

"At the very least, cooling the grain will prevent any further insect damage," says Dolinski.

Another option is feeding the grain to livestock during the winter notes Dolinski, as the insects aren't hazardous to livestock.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Stored grain insect alert	1
Ruminant methane greenhouse effect overestimated	2
Consider lamb marketing options	2
Economic challenges of horse industry conference topic	3
Pork seminar focuses on industry challenges	3
Caring tips for gift plants	4
Procedures for planning	4
Briefs	5

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Van Natto says producers must take the lead in minimizing insect infestations. "Insect infestations hurt everyone involved in the grain industry. Because grain elevators are forbidden by law from accepting infested grain, the producer may be the first one to pay the price."

Infested grain that gets past the country elevator will ultimately be detected he says. The farther along the line it's discovered, the more costly the remedy, and ultimately the costs are passed back to the producer.

Producers with questions about stored grain insect problems or about grain storage and handling problems, should call their local Alberta Agriculture district office or municipal fieldman for information and advice.

Contact: *Mike Dolinksi* *427-7098* *Chris Van Natto* *(204)983-2788*

Ruminant methane greenhouse effect overestimated

Traditional calculations of methane's contributions to the greenhouse effect, and particularly ruminants' role in methane production, have been overstated says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"While it's true cattle produce methane, that methane's importance in the greenhouse effect is less than once believed," says Ross Gould of the beef cattle and sheep branch. "A pair of Cornell University scientists have examined the issue more thoroughly, taken into account factors such as methane breakdown in the atmosphere and ruminant recycling of atmospheric carbon dioxide, and found methane's effect has been overestimated."

Gould says the Cornell researchers findings confirm the total environmental impact of methane is very small compared to other sources. "It again squelches the alarm raised about ruminant methane production. It tells us that reducing methane production in cattle, or reducing meat consumption from all ruminants—cattle, sheep and goats—will have almost no effect on global warming."

Some scientists had estimated that ruminants, including cattle and sheep, produced between 10 to 15 per cent of atmospheric methane. This was throught to represent three per cent of the greenhouse effect. The Cornell team of Thomas Drennen and Duane Chapman say that's an overestimation by a factor of eight. "This means the world's cattle population is, in fact, responsible for less than one per cent of the greenhouse gases," says Gould.

Drennen and Chapman say there are two reasons for the overestimation. While methane is much more effective than carbon dioxide in trapping heat, it also breaks down in the atmosphere 15 times more rapidly than carbon dioxide. "The net effect over the long run is the greenhouse effect of methane is only 10 times that of carbon dioxide, not 53," says Gould.

The second factor the researchers took into account was recycling of atmospheric carbon dioxide in methane production. Feed consumed by cattle is produced from crops that use carbon dioxide to make starch and cellulose. Both are fermented into methane during digestion.

"The carbon dioxide in this equation had a greenhouse effect. As a result, the net increase of the effect from the cattle-produced methane is much less. And so too, the net greenhouse effect of methane from cattle is less than that from fossil fuel sources," says Gould.

To illustrate how the methane effect had been overestimated, the Cornell duo compared the greenhouse effect of carbon dioxide emissions from automobiles with methane emissions from a beef cow. The old calculations suggested the daily methane emission from an average cow would be equivalent to the greenhouse effect of a car driven 26 km. Taking the disappearance of methane and carbon dioxide recycling into account, a cow's daily methane production becomes equal to the carbon dioxide produced by a car driven 3.2 km.

Contact: *Ross Gould* *427-5083*

Consider lamb marketing options

Lamb producers faced with depressed markets need to consider their marketing alternatives says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"Producers who currently are having trouble with getting a delivery booking should consider other options. As well, producers should still be looking at their bottom line even though the lamb market is soft," says JoAnn Cmoluch Sandhu.

Lamb markets in Alberta continue to be depressed. Rising seasonal volumes and lack of real recovery in the U.S. market are the cause. "For Alberta producers this means playing a waiting a game for price recovery, but some have the more real problem of lambs that are ready to market," she says.

Sandhu suggests producers with lambs on the verge of being overweight and who can't get delivery bookings at Canada West Foods in Innisfail, try selling on a railgrade basis. "Assuming a 50 per cent dressing percentage for the average slaughter lamb, you could be leaving as much as $8 per cwt live on the table, if you are delivering top quality lambs that aren't overweight," she says.

Another alternative for consideration is marketing lambs in the U.S. She has one caution, U.S. processors won't accept intact ram lambs.

She also notes just as lamb prices have declined, so have feed costs, replacement stock costs and financial carrying charges. "With interim support coming from stabilization programs and few attractive production alternatives, hanging

Cont'd on page 3

in there until there is a turnaround in lamb markets may not be too bad."

Prices will continue to be soft until the U.S. flock downsizes she says, and adds a strong Canadian dollar will mute U.S. price increases, as will large local supplies. She projects Alberta lamb prices in the $50 to $53/cwt range in January and slightly higher each month after that.

Contact: JoAnn Cmoluch Sandhu
427-5387

Economic challenges of horse industry conference topic

An American equine economist will discuss how bad economic times breed good livestock at the Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference next month in Red Deer.

"Dr. Malcolm Commer will discuss how economic hard times, particularly recession, affect the horse industry," says Les Burwash of Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch. "His conference audience will be interested to hear his perspective on the positive sides to an economic downturn."

Burwash adds the conference organizers are very pleased Commer will share his expertise at the January 10 through 12 conference. "Dr. Commer is one of the few agricultural economists in the world to be certified as a specialist in equine production and management by the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists," he notes.

In a recent Modern Horse Breeding article Commer wrote that in current economic conditions only top-of-line horses are profitable to breed: "So the good news is this: a recession means that the market will ultimately bring forth a far better group of horses."

The annual Alberta Horse Owners and Breeders conference has developed into one of the best of its kind in North America. It offers sessions in specific streams for Thoroughbred, Arabian, Quarter Horse owners and breeders, as well as an all breeds program. A wide range of industry topics are on the conference agenda covering reproduction, athletic performance, economics, exporting, diseases, industry ethics and animal welfare.

For registration and other conference information, contact either the horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650, or in Edmonton at 427-6361.

Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

Pork seminar focuses on industry challenges

Five areas that will challenge pork producers in the future will be on the discussion table at the 1992 Banff Pork Seminar January 21 through 24.

"The seminar is divided into sessions dealing with topics in areas we believe will be important to the successful producer," says Fred Schuld, head of Alberta Agriculture's pork and poultry branch and the chairman of the seminar's organizing committee.

The broad subject categories are feed and water quality, herd performance, marketing and industry infrastructure, housing alternatives and improving breeding herd management. Recognized experts from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States will address specific topics within those categories.

"One of our international speakers will lead off the first session by looking at the impact of feed and water quality on swine welfare and productivity," notes Schuld. Peter Brooks will also discuss European developments in housing systems later in the conference. Brooks, based at the Polytechnic South West in the United Kingdom, has an international reputation as a leading researcher in swine nutrition, production and welfare. He also writes a monthly column in a British pig farming magazine.

Another U.K. speaker at the seminar is Paul Toplis, technical marketing director for the United Kingdom's largest piglet diet manufacturer. A world authority on swine nutrition, Toplis will present "Feeding for 30 kg in 60 days".

An American swine specialist will also share his expertise at the conference. Gary Dial, a professor and extension veterinarian at the University of Minnesota, will discuss record-based performance analysis, integrated management and economic considerations, and also take part in a panel discussion on performance. Dial was instrumental in developing "Pig CHAMP", a computerized swine record system. He is also currently president of the American Association of Swine Practitioners.

Three Alberta Agriculture specialists will also speak at the seminar. Swine veterinarian Garry Finell will discuss biosecurity, or safe sex in a farrow to finish operation. Regional specialists Bert Dening and Irene Wenger will work with producers on presentations related to alternative housing. Professors Frank Aherne and George Foxcroft of the University of Alberta's department of animal science are also on the program

Schuld notes one change from previous seminar is the co-ordinating body. The University of Alberta's department of animal science has taken over responsibility for running the seminar from the faculty of extension. Registration and other conference information is now available by calling Kathy Bush at 492-2601.

Cont'd on page 4

The Banff Pork Seminar is designed for people interested in improving their pork production knowledge and decision-making abilities. This includes commercial pork producers, researchers, agribusiness service and supply representatives, extension and education specialists, and anyone else interested in up-to-date pork technology and production.

Contact: Fred Schuld
427-5320

Caring tips for your gift plants

When the perky poinsettia you received as a Christmas present begins to drop leaves, you might not have it in a bright enough spot in your house says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Overwatering is the most common problem people have after they receive a gift plant in the winter, because plants use less water then. But, too much water isn't the only way things can go wrong. Besides overwatering, light, temperatures and drafts often are linked to plant problems," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Alberta Agriculture Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks.

Watering, however, is often a critical part of care she notes. "Most traditional gift plants should be watered when the top of the soil is dry to the touch. Water the plant thoroughly and allow the excess to drain," she says.

Azaleas are one exception to the "dry to the touch rule". Soil should be kept moist all the time and not allowed to dry out. As well, chrysanthemums shouldn't be allowed to dry out to where they're wilting.

"Beyond watering there are several basic care guides to follow that will help you to keep flowering plants long past the holiday season," she says.

One is related to watering. She recommends removing colored foil around plant pots, or punch holes in the bottom, so water can drain. Second, put the plants in bright light, but out of direct sun. Hot, sunny locations will usually reduce flower life. Nor, do flowers last long in a dark location.

Normal room temperatures are usually suitable, but flowering plants last longer in cool temperatures, between 16 and 22°C. Cyclamen, in particular, need cool conditions to thrive.

As well, plants should be kept out of drafty locations by a door or over a heat register. Drafts will also reduce the length of time a plant is attractive.

Barkley says plants will give clues to what may be causing them to change from lush to yellowing and or wilted.

If the buds on a holiday or Christmas cactus wilt, raise the humidity and water it more often. If it's dropping buds, lack or excess water, exposure to cold drafts, excessive handling, overfertilization or a changing environment can be to blame.

Azaleas with yellow leaves may mean the soil is becoming alkaline. Barkley suggests dusting the soil surface with powdered sulphur once a month or adding vinegar to the water (4 mL vinegar in 1L of water). Another alternative is watering the plant with snow melt, rain or distilled water.

"Poinsettias will give many different signs of any problems," she says. "For instance, if the poinsettia drops leaves, suspect a low light level and move it to a brighter spot."

Droopy leaves and bracts may mean the plant has been sleeved (wrapped in paper) too long. The droop should only last 24 to 48 hours if the condition is remedied. Yellowing leaves and sudden leaf drop could mean sudden temperature fluctuations, or too dry soil. Bluish or white bracts could indicate an irreversible chilling injury.

Rotting flowers and leaves with a fine, downy mold on chrysanthemum leaves means gray mould. A fungicide spray, benomyl or folpet, should take care of the problem.

To prevent problems when giving or receiving a plant, Barkley advises taking care of the plant during transportation. Wrap the plant well for transportation. Make sure vehicles are warm before taking the plant outside. Don't set the plant right in front of the vehicle's heat vent. Unwrap the plant as soon as possible when it's taken indoors.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
362-3391

Procedures for planning

(second in a series)

Running a farm without some kind of planning is like trying to dance in snowshoes says an Alberta Agriculture farm business management economist.

"It lacks style, requires extra work and no one, including yourself, is sure of the next step," says Craig Edwards, of the farm business management branch in Olds.

Planning often seems to be one of those abstract terms that falls into that nice-but-not-necessary category, he says. "But for a farmer, planning is just as vital as knowing how grain grows or how to put pounds on a calf."

Farm planning involves setting goals and then developing a plan to achieve those goals. If there isn't a plan of some kind, then farmers wouldn't accomplish much. "With a lot of random stop-and-go decisions, a farming operation would be less productive," he says.

"Most farmers, and farm families, have a plan or plans of some kind, even though they don't write them on paper. Although it's created and it exists in the farmer's mind, a plan is far more useful when written on paper," says the specialist.

When the plan is written out, farmers and family, partners and others concerned with the operation have an opportunity to understand and contribute to the planning procedure.

"A written plan is an outline or sketch of the organization and available resources and their use in the future. It can be very

Cont'd on page 5

simple and even skimpy. Ideally, it should be detailed enough to include operating costs and returns for each enterprise on the farm. Developed as a whole farm budget, the plan could be used as a map for the organization and operation of the physical and financial farm resources," Edwards says.

Alberta farmers wanting to learn more about farm planning can attend courses such as the Alberta Agriculture Gear Up Advantage program. Registration information is available from Alberta Agriculture district offices. District staff and regional economists can also provide assistance to farmers interested in farm planning.

As well, the farm business management branch has developed two publications as a planning package. One is called "Gauge: A Year End 'Do It Yourself' Financial Package" and the other is "Farm Financial Planning Worksheets" (FFPW). These publications may be available at Alberta Agriculture district offices.

Publication requests can be made by writing Edwards at, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta T0M 1P0 or calling 556-4248.

Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

Agri-News briefs

Wheat growers convention'92 in Calgary Jan.8-10

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association will hold its convention and trade show January 8 through 10 at the Palliser Hotel in Calgary. The convention includes a business meeting, panel discussions, presentations, a seminar and special guest speakers. Presentations include a team of motivational experts and grain marketing. Panel discussions will examine farmers and the law and the international grain trade. A seminar will look at how participants can make money when they get home. Special guest speaker at a wrap-up luncheon is JoAnne Polack, former Ottawa Roughriders manager, talking about turning around that team. Registration and other information is available by contacting any of the association's provincial offices at (403)467-3374 in Edmonton, (306)586-5866 in Regina or (204)942-1680 in Winnipeg.

Steady hog prices ahead this winter

While U.S. slaughter hog prices are likely to take a seasonal rebound into the low $40 range this winter, price increases in Canadian markets are less likely says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Historically Canadian hog markets have posted the lowest prices in December and January," says Ron Gietz. He says the most likely Alberta slaughter hog price scenario is steady prices through the winter with a small rally next spring. Overall, he adds, 1992 hog prices should average well below 1991 levels. He predicts January 1992 prices at $1.05/kg (dressed) compared to $1.39/kg in January 1991. He projects prices at $1.10 February through April. This compares to a range of $1.43 to $1.48 for the previous year. For more information, contact Gietz in Edmonton at 427-5376.

Special crop markets steady in November

Special crop markets were steady to marginally higher into November says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. Yellow and feed pea values strengthened modestly, as did Laird lentils says Al Dooley. He adds green pea prices and prices for mustards were unchanged. "With few exceptions, special crop markets are weaker than a year ago," he says. "Larger pea and lentil crops both in Canada and the U.S. have contributed to this weakness." Over the next couple of months the trade will come out with production contracts for 1992. "These will give some indication as to where the trade believes prices are headed," he says. Dooley advises producers to keep in touch with the market. "Prices can vary from company to company depending on a number of factors." For more information, contact Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5387.

Hold off canola pricing until January

An Alberta Agriculture market analyst is encouraging farm managers to hold off pricing their remaining canola until January. "Improvements in futures prices and narrower basis levels should increase local canola prices to the $225 to $245 per tonne range," says Charlie Pearson. He adds canola producers should have the majority of their 1991 crop prices by the end of March. "Any spring/summer rallies from weather scares should be used to price your 1992 crop," he says. Pearson says January Winnipeg canola futures contract prices are expected to remain in the $265 to $285 per tonne range during December and local cash prices should be in the $210

to $230 range. For more information, contact Pearson in Edmonton at 427-5386.

4-Hers "explore new frontiers" at W4'91

Just over 100 4-H members from across the province participated in two Ways with Words Weekends (W4) workshops this fall. The workshops are designed to enhance interpersonal communication skills. Using this year's theme of "exploring new frontiers", members and three 4-H leaders worked in small group sessions exploring self esteem, non-verbal communication and listening skills. Delegates also practiced their skills and learned how to do demonstrations for their club. The W4 workshops were held at the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake and McNally Community Centre in Lethbridge. Alberta Agriculture is the program sponsor. W4 is an annual provincial program for 4-H members between the ages of 14 and 21 years, 4-H leaders and alumni members. For more information, call Aaron Madson in Edmonton at 422-4444.

Vancouver wheat asking prices up

Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) Vancouver asking prices for number one wheat are currently up says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. The asking prices for 13.5 per cent protein #1 CWRS wheat are at about $207 per tonne, up 16 per cent from the 1990-91 average says Charlie Pearson. Prices are also up in the east. CWB St. Lawrence asking prices for the same class of wheat are $185 per tonne, up 21 per cent from the 1990-91 average. Pearson says improvements in international wheat prices are expected to continue through the winter and should also bring up the CWB final payment. He still advises farmers to follow a quota management strategy that maximizes wheat delivery opportunities and to fill quotas promptly as they are announced. For more information, contact Pearson in Edmonton at 427-5386.

AL. 1.59

AGRI-NEWS

December 16, 1991

Tight oat supplies in coming year

Smaller 1991 oat crops in both Canada and the U.S. will mean much tighter North American oat supplies in the coming year says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

"These tight supplies mean oat prices will maintain price premiums in relation to other feedgrain alternatives during the winter," says Charlie Pearson.

"For Alberta producers that means taking advantage of the winter time period to price their 1991 crop," says Pearson. Edmonton based Alberta Grain Commission prices in late November ranged from $76 to $90 per tonne. That's up about $10 per tonne from 1990-91 levels. Elevator bids were at about $70 per tonne, also up $10 per tonne.

Pearson says tight supplies in North America have the potential to improve prices another five to 10 dollars per tonne during the winter. Unless drought threatens the 1992 feedgrain crop, prices are expected to decline in the spring back to a probable $75 to $90 per tonne (Alberta-based) range.

Oat producers are also advised by Pearson to use winter rallies to pre-price a portion of their 1992 production.

U.S. oat production is currently estimated as dropping off by 32 per cent from 1990 levels by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The production decline reflects both a 10 bushel per acre yield reduction and a decrease in harvested acres says Pearson.

The decrease represents a decline to historically low levels he adds. "U.S. farmers harvested their smallest oat acreage since the late 1900s, mostly as a result of farm support programs that favored switching to other cropping alternatives."

The Canadian situation of tight oat supplies mirrors the American one. Statistics Canada estimated production as down 16 per cent from the previous year to about 2.4 million tonnes. A 10 per cent reduction in oat acreage was the major factor in the decline.

Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

Fed cattle prices dependent on price spread change

The key to future price recovery in the Alberta fed cattle market is a return to a more normal relationship between Alberta and outside markets says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

Despite a $3 to $4/cwt improvement for U.S. fed cattle by mid-November, Alberta fed cattle remained at a large discount to U.S. prices. "In late November Alberta slaughter steer prices were about $12/cwt under the U.S. market. This compares to a $6 differential a year ago," says Ron Gietz.

"If the price spread between Alberta and other markets returns to historical levels, then fed cattle prices will probably improve this winter," he says. Gietz is projecting that will happen, and forecasts Alberta Direct Sale steer prices averaging at $77/cwt in December, $78 during January and $80 in February.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Tight oat supplies in coming year	*1*
Fed cattle prices dependent on price spread change	*1*
New look in 1992 for popular farm calendar	*2*
Program format innovations at MAP'92	*2*
Speakers highlight age, biomechanical analysis in horse reproduction	*3*
Economic principles used in farm planning	*3*
Briefs	*4*

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Gietz also has an explanation for producer speculation the breeding stock market had collapsed. "The breeding stock market is particularly prone to exaggeration of price trends. As well, a wide variation in quality contributes to this phenomenon. When the market is strong, it seems every bred cow in the country is worth $1,400. When the market is weak, every cow goes for $500," he says.

In general, prices for bred cows and heifers this fall have been reported as lower than last fall. Excellent breeding stock are still widely quoted above $1,000 per head, particularly in southern Alberta markets. Good to average bred cows and heifers are trading consistently in the $700 to $800 range, or about $50 off year-ago prices.

Gietz says he expects lower cow and heifer prices with the second half of the calf run through November and December. "Breeding stock prices seem to show a strong correlation to calf prices of the day."

Contact: Ron Gietz
427-5376

New look in 1992 for popular farm calendar

A new look heralds a new year in the latest edition of Alberta Agriculture's popular save-all farm management planning calendar.

"When we started revamping the calendar for 1992, we wanted to maintain its durability with a heavy paper stock, the versatility of a coil binding, but most of all, keep its pocket," says Anita Lunden of the farm business management branch in Olds.

"This distinctive calendar redesign will also serve another purpose. With its new side coil bind, you have the option of either hanging it on your wall, or using it as a desk calendar," she adds.

Lunden says the calendar is popular with Alberta farm families because it's more than a calendar. "It's also a compact farm office organizer that can help farmers keep track of bills, receipts, coming events, weather conditions and variety of other family and business dates."

Limited quantities of the 1992 calendar are now available to farm families at Alberta Agriculture district offices on a first-come, first-served basis.

A co-operative project of Alberta Agriculture, the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) and several private and public sponsors, the calendars have been made available to the province's farm families for the past decade. Lunden says the financial support provided by the sponsors is appreciated in continuing the annual project. The sponsors are: the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC), Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch, AGT Mobile Communications, Alberta Pool's Farm Information Systems, Cominco, NOVA Corporation, TransAlta Utilities and Treasury Branches of Alberta.

Contact: Anita Lunden
556-4240

Program format innovations at MAP'92

The 1992 Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP'92) conference will celebrate its 15th anniversary of providing farm couples with a management issues conference March 1 through 4.

"For this 15th edition we're making some program innovations to give participants a more relaxed pace for absorbing the expertise speakers are providing in the conference sessions," says Doug Barlund, of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch.

Concurrent sessions will run three at a time, rather than four he notes. Following the first full day of the conference, speakers will be available for information discussions in a "freemarket atmosphere". During the second day participants will have an afternoon break and the evening will feature a plenary speaker. "These changes replace the more structured bearpit speaker sessions that were held in the evening," says Barlund, who is the 1992 conference chair. "All of the changes are in response to the comments we've had from participants at past conferences," he adds.

As always, farm couples are encouraged to attend the management conference and the registration fee reflects this emphasis. A single registration is $150 (plus GST), and registration for a couple is just $50 more.

Conference organizers are also encouraging farm couples to attend the sessions together. "In the past couples have split up the schedule to cover as much ground as possible. With fewer sessions, we're hoping they will attend sessions together so they can better discuss and apply that information to their own situation at home," Barlund says.

A lower room rate, without meal packages, was negotiated for the 1992 conference at the same location, the Lodge at Kananaskis. Rates will be $98 per couple per day and $93 per single per day. Lunch will be the only meal included as part of the registration package. "This allows people to make individual decisions about other meals and perhaps save some money," he says.

The conference will stick to its theme of farm business is family business adds Barlund. "Through the years management topics have evolved as the focus of the conference, plus we've offered a wide variety of other farm and farm business topics." In 1992 that range includes investment strategies, niche markets, a free trade up-date, self-esteem, environmental issues affecting businesses, sowing seeds of laughter in marriage and a Canadian economic and financial market outlook.

Cont'd on page 3

MAP'92 is co-sponsored by the Rural Education Development Association (REDA) and Alberta Agriculture with additional assistance from the private and public sectors.

Brochures and registration forms are now available from all Alberta Agriculture district offices. For more information, contact the nearest Alberta Agriculture district office, Barlund, or Trish Pannell in Olds at 556-4240 (FAX 556-7545). You can also write: MAP'92, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

Contact: Doug Barlund 556-4240 Trish Pannell 556-4240

Speakers highlight age, biomechanical analysis in horse reproduction

Two expert speakers will look at different dimensions of how to breed better horses at the annual Alberta Horse Owners and Breeders Conference next month in Red Deer.

The relationship of age to a mare's reproductive performance is one of the topics for discussion. Another is using biomechanical analysis to select young horses and mates.

Dirk Vanderwall, a veterinarian and researcher at the University of Idaho's Northwest Reproductive Laboratory, has found fertility begins to decline steadily in mares after age 12. He will discuss his research that found pregnancy rates were 33 per cent lower, foaling rates averaged 28 per cent lower and the rate of pregnancy loss was 25 per cent higher in older mares.

Vanderwall has also found evidence that aged mares' fertility problems are in part from old, defective eggs and that very old mares—over 25 years—appear to go through a menopause-like change.

Paul Mostert uses his knowledge of mathematics, science and computer technology to match mares to stallions. After operating his own breeding and training centre, Mostert started EQUIX Biomechanics. The company offers an advisory service to the industry giving objective evaluations of horses based on their mechanics and heart efficiency. As well, the assessment includes analysis of how those mechanics might be inherited in potential matings.

Mostert describes his service as how modern genetics can be used to narrow the range of uncertainty in breeding. He will discuss both the Biomechanical Efficiency Score (BME Score) in his system and how to match mares and stallions.

The annual Alberta Horse Owners and Breeders conference is one of the best of its kind in North America. It offers sessions in specific streams for Thoroughbred, Arabian, Quarter Horse owners and breeders, as well as an all breeds program. A wide range of industry topics are on the January 10 through 12 conference agenda covering reproduction, athletic performance, economics, exporting, diseases, industry ethics and animal welfare.

For registration and other conference information, contact either the horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650, or in Edmonton at 427-6361.

Contact: Les Burwash 297-6650

Economic principles used in farm planning

(Third in a series)

Effort is required to learn the basics of farm planning, but once you've learned those skills, they'll be useful for the rest of your life says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Understanding and using the principles in farm planning requires study and energy," says Craig Edwards, farm management economist at Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds. "But once learned and applied, the principles benefit farmers by simplifying decision making."

Economic principles provide the framework to make informed and reasonable decisions which eventually will maximize the wealth of the decision maker. They are applied in all businesses, not only farming.

A principle is defined as a general or fundamental truth, comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine or assumption on which others are based, or from which others are derived. "In an era when management decisions are so critical to the success of any operation, it's important that these fundamental laws—these economic principles—be understood when a farmer is planning," Edwards says.

"Fortunately," he adds, "There are only a few economic principles used to maximize returns in a business." These include diminishing returns, added costs and returns, equimarginal returns, opportunity costs, and resource and product substitution.

In farm management, economic principles guide the decision making process. They simplify the job of choosing which resources to use in the production process, what products to produce and how much of each to attempt to produce.

These business principles are just as real as the principles people live by, the principles of nature, or the principles of mechanics he says.

"Many of us live by the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' which is a principle to live by," he says. "We learn to stand upright in our cribs after we adapt to the principles of gravity. Farmers use augers to move grain, using the principles of the screw described by Archimedes more than 2,000 years ago. We are surrounded by material goods built on the application of principles of nature, which we learned in school but can't remember now. How many of use

Cont'd on page 4

can remember the principles of mechanics, heat and thermodynamics, optics, electricity, magnetism, sound and so on?"

Attending an Alberta Agriculture Gear Up Advantage course is one of the best ways to learn farm management planning skills he says. Program information is available by calling any Alberta Agriculture district office.

The farm business management branch has developed two publications as a planning package. One is called "Gauge: A Year End 'Do It Yourself' Financial Package" and the other is the "Farm Financial Planning Worksheets" (FFPW). These publications may be available at Alberta Agriculture district offices. District staff and regional economists can also provide assistance to farmers interested in farm planning.

You can request the publications by writing Edwards at the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta T0M 1P0, or calling him at 556-4248.

Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

Agri-News briefs

FSAM applications out to farmers

Alberta farmers should have received an application earlier this month for the second phase of the federal Farm Support and Adjustment Measures (FSAM) program. The federal government announced an $800 million program in October. Producers who have questions can call a national toll-free number—1-800-267-6008—for information.

Forage seed markets weak

Forage seed markets continue to be generally weak with one exception says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. "Fescue continues to surprise and in November increased to the 45 cent per pound level. This is now near the long term average price level," says Al Dooley. He says some buying activity appears to be speculative. "We continue to recommend selling a portion of your crop at these values," he says. For most of the other major forage seeds he says, the downside risk is small and the upside is equally limited. "What remains to be seen is whether or not a tight supply situation will translate into higher prices or just an improvement in sales volume," Dooley says. He adds the next two to three months are a critical period for clover sales into the U.S, the major market. For more information, contact Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5387.

Provincial soil conservation workshop/ACTS meeting Jan. 13-15

Well-known Alberta soil scientist Fred Bentley will be the keynote speaker at the 1992 provincial soil conservation workshop. The workshop, which runs from January 10 through 13 at the Fantasyland Hotel in Edmonton, also includes the 14th annual Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) meeting. Conference participants can attend concurrent sessions on a number of topics covering equipment modification, range management, pasture and forage management, current soil conservation research, and wildlife habitat and soil conservation. Two producers in each of the five soil zones will also discuss a full year's cycle of their conservation program. For more information, contact Russ Evans, ACTS executive manager, in Calgary at 936-5523 or Peter Gamache, Alberta Agriculture conservation and development branch, in Edmonton at 422-4385.

Processed forage production figures rebound

Canadian production of forage pellets and cubes this year is estimated at about 100,000 tonnes more than last year's disappointingly low level says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst. Production may even set a new record says Al Dooley. In 1990-91 Canada suffered its first processed forage production setback in about a decade. This year, dehy pellet production is leading the way in increased production and may reach a new record of about 390,000 tonnes, compared to a previous high of 347,000 tonnes. In Alberta pellet production is very similar to a year ago, about 209,000 tonnes. "This is lower than the 1988-89 record of 274,000 tonnes and, reflects, at least in part, the diversification that has occurred in Alberta plants over the past couple of years," Dooley says. Pellet exports to the principal market, Japan, are currently slow and could indicate a difficult year for the Canadian industry he says. On the other hand, the Japanese market for baled hay continues to show tremendous growth. "The pace of imports so far in 1991 suggest that by the year end the Japanese will purchase close to one million tonnes of baled product," he says. While the U.S. accounts for most of these shipments, the Canadian industry is also making inroads into the market. For more information, contact Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5387.

Seed cleaners hold 39th annual convention Jan. 16-18

Enthusiasm makes a difference is the banner theme of the 39th Association of Alberta Co-op Seed Cleaning Plants annual convention January 16 through 18 in Edmonton. Besides the business meeting, a number of topics are on the conference agenda including updates on new plant construction, outlines of the GRIP and NISA programs, safety in the workplace, a description of Olds College grain and seed technology course and a plant industry report. Ernie Isley, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, will give the opening address. The convention will be at the Westin Hotel in Edmonton. For more information, contact Gus Lindstrom in Bashaw at 372-3580.

Canadian honey production up marginally

Canadian honey production is estimated as up modestly from last year but still below the 1985-89 average. Alberta production is also slightly below the five year average says Al Dooley, Alberta Agriculture market analyst. While total production is down, yields are up. The national average has been estimated at 64 kg per colony, about 10 kg higher than the five year average. Yields in Alberta were down from a year ago, but still surpassed the 58 kg colony average of 1985-89 Dooley notes the Statistics Canada estimates of Alberta production are slightly higher than those from an Alberta Agriculture survey. For more information, contact Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5387.

AGRI-NEWS

December 23, 1991

Simulations give producers marketing edge

Depressed grain markets and the cyclical highs and tumbles of livestock markets means effective marketing is a key part of any farmer's success says an Alberta Agriculture regional marketing economist.

"Quite simply marketing makes a difference and it requires good skills, just as production does. Good production techniques will yield a better product or yield, and marketing expertise means more profit," says the Fairview-based Lee Melvill.

"And just as production proficiency must be learned, so must marketing skills," he adds. To assist in that learning, Alberta producers can turn to three market teaching packages available through Alberta Agriculture. The three—FutureSim, CattleSim and GrainSim—offer actual market simulation to help producers learn the language and mechanics of and alternatives offered in the corresponding markets.

"Better understanding of their markets and the ways they can sell their products give producers an important edge. These market simulations are a way to build marketing skills," he says.

FutureSim offers participants the opportunity to try forward pricing using hedging on the futures market without laying any cash on the line. They can buy and sell futures contracts while learning the factors that influence the world market. These factors include world weather patterns, world trade patterns, and seeding and harvesting dates for various commodities worldwide.

"For some, the language of hedging seems intimidating. Through the FutureSim simulation producers can get comfortable with the terms and the mechanics of the futures market and then be able to use that market to their advantage," he says.

CattleSim takes its participants through two calf crops over a period of two and half years. Participants can choose from a variety of delivery alternatives as well as market pricing alternatives.

"For some, CattleSim exposes them to marketing alternatives they haven't tried. For others, the importance of analyzing the markets comes through. For most, practice-marketing in CattleSim gives them confidence to try new marketing approaches that put more dollars in their pockets," says Melvill.

GrainSim, says Melvill, is designed to simulate actual farm level grain marketing. "It was developed to teach high levels of marketing savvy and understanding to grain producers, as well to as agribusinesses such as agricultural lenders and grain company staff."

In the simulation exercise, participants choose what crops they'd like to produce and the seeded acreage of each. They also decide fertilizer and pesticide levels. To add to the reality, they also have a 20-year land mortgage and four-year machinery debt. Once these operating and production costs are set, participants learn to develop and implement a marketing strategy for their simulated "farm" using contracting and marketing alternatives.

"GrainSim emphasizes developing a marketing plan, so the farm manager doesn't have to make forced, last-minute

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Simulations give producers marketing edge	1
Studies back alfalfa for saline seep control	2
The Green Cow new Alberta Agriculture "western"	2
Popular speakers return to MAP'92	3
Dairy extension series looks at mastitis	3
Making production decisions	3
Briefs	4

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

marketing decisions based on cash flow crunches and storage space shortages," says Melvill. "The marketing plan is something that becomes part of their overall farm financial plan."

Alberta Agriculture marketing specialists began developing the market simulation exercises in the late 1980s. The first was FutureSim, followed by CattleSim, and most recently by GrainSim.

Producers interested in trying any of these market simulations should contact their Alberta Agriculture district office for more information.

Contact: Lee Melvill
835-2291

Studies back alfalfa for saline seep control

Evidence supporting alfalfa as a superior way to control saline seeps continues to grow says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

"Vegetative control of dryland saline seeps is now an accepted practice in Alberta and we are continuing to learn more about the advantages of using alfalfa," says Don Wentz, a salinity control specialist with the conservation and development branch.

Wentz says many producers have been reluctant to plant alfalfa and prefer to flex crop or continuous crop for salinity control. "But our evidence suggests if they want productive land, they need to change their practices."

At a study site in the County of Warner, two similar saline seeps have been monitored since 1983. One seep has its recharge area seeded to alfalfa. At the other site, the recharge area has been continuously cropped with annual cereals.

"We've seen very good results at the alfalfa site," he says. The electrical conductivity (EC), a measure of salinity, dropped considerably in the eight year period the site has been monitored. The EC is measured in the top foot of soil and fell from 13.3 decisemins per metre (dsm-1) to 1.7 dsm-1. In 1990, a cereal crop followed the alfalfa and produced a 20 bushel per acre crop. The water table has also been lowered from 0.9 m in 1983 to 2.0 m in 1991.

"The other saline seep that was continuously cropped is still unproductive," notes Wentz. As well, the water table that was 2.2 m in 1983 had risen to 0.35 m by the spring of 1991.

Wentz's study of the two seeps also included an economic comparison of alfalfa and annual crop production. The annual average gross margin (gross return minus annual fixed costs) for alfalfa was $23.03 per year. On the other hand, the continuously cropped spring wheat had a gross margin of $6.27 per year. The latter figure doesn't include any government payments through the study period.

"From these findings it appears alfalfa not only does a superior job of controlling stored groundwater than annual cropping, but it's also more economically competitive," he says.

Wentz adds his research is backed up by a recent publication by a Montana State University researcher. In Saline Seep Diagnosis Control and Reclamation, Paul Brown writes "seeding alfalfa in the recharge area of a saline seep is often the quickest, most effective way to dry the deep subsoil and stop water flow to the saline seep". He adds alfalfa must cover 80 per cent of the recharge area to be effective.

Wentz's study is part of the Dryland Salinity Investigation Program established by Alberta Agriculture in 1982. "We've gathered a lot of valuable information through those years, and certainly can assist any producer who has a problem with saline seeps," says Wentz. He advises producers to contact him in Lethbridge at 381-5862, a regional crop/soils specialist, or local district agriculturist for more information.

Contact: Don Wentz
381-5862

The Green Cow new Alberta Agriculture "western"

When a stranger from cattle country rides into Pleasant Valley and asks for steak, the town's saloon patrons react with shocked gasps: their luncheon menu is tofu and lettuce sandwiches. From there, the stranger goes on to debunk myths about beef consumption and the beef industry in a new Alberta Agriculture "western" titled the "The Green Cow".

"The video is aimed at a junior and high school audience, but it certainly would be of interest to all ages," says Rob Thirlwell, Alberta Agriculture broadcast media producer who wrote, produced and directed the production.

In the 15 minute video, the stranger tangles with Bart, the local tough guy, whose intimidation of the local citizenry has extended to their eating habits. Bart contends world hunger, the greenhouse effect and rain forest destruction all can be pinned on cattle. After providing the locals with the facts about cattle's role in conservation, converting forage into human food and that beef consumption includes a number of other every day products from leather to cosmetics, the stranger explains, "Cows aren't the bad guys, cows are green".

"In the presentation it's also pointed out that people should make informed choices, and not rely solely on a particular interest group that may not be providing all the facts," notes Thirlwell. He adds "The Green Cow" contains the sort of information necessary to understand some of the controversy that has recently plagued the beef industry.

A number of Alberta Agriculture specialists added their expertise as production consultants including beef

Cont'd on page 3

management, conservation and development, forage, soils and Ag in the Classroom specialists.

"The Green Cow" is available for loan from all Alberta Agriculture district offices and also from the central Film Library at 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Contact: Rob Thirlwell
427-2127

Popular speakers return to MAP'92

Two popular speakers from last year's Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP) conference are returning to the 1992 program.

"Gordon Colledge and Don Jonovic's debut appearances at MAP'91 were extremely well received by conference participants, so they are coming back to share their expertise," says conference chair Doug Barlund of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch.

Both Colledge and Jonovic use humour to provoke their audiences to think about human relations and management issues says Barlund. "Both are story tellers, and use that skill along with their professional and personal experiences to make their points real to their audiences."

Colledge, widely known for his speciality in family interaction, media and family communications, is currently based at Lethbridge Community College. A much in demand speaker across Western Canada, he will discuss strengthening family relationships in his MAP'92 presentation.

Jonovic, an Ohio based consultant, speaker and author, will again address managing success in the family business, as well as advice on business succession. He has specialized in working with family businesses for nearly two decades and is an internationally recognized authority in that field.

Other MAP'92 session topics will follow the theme of "farm business is family business" in a variety of areas including financial, marketing and human resource management.

Registration costs encourage farm couples to attend MAP. This year a single registration is $150, and $200 (plus GST) for a couple. MAP'92 will be held at the Lodge at Kananaskis. Brochures and registration forms are now available from all Alberta Agriculture district offices. As well, interested persons can contact Barlund, or Trish Pannell, at the farm business management branch in Olds at 556-4240.

MAP'92 is co-sponsored by the Rural Education Development Association (REDA) and Alberta Agriculture with additional assistance from the private and public sectors.

Contact: Doug Barlund
556-4245

Dairy extension series looks at mastitis

More about mastitis is the billing for the 1992 Alberta dairy extension series coming to five communities across the province through January.

"Two feature speakers and Alberta Agriculture dairy specialists will lead the day-long seminars that start in Lethbridge on January 27 and move north from there to Olds, Barrhead, Vermilion and Leduc," says Brian Rhiness, provincial dairy specialist in Wetaskiwin.

Alberta Agriculture's Gerald Ollis, a dairy cattle veterinarian, and Lorraine Sordillo of VIDO will discuss trace minerals, immunology and their relationship with mastitis, reproduction and herd health.

Sordillo will also update seminar participants on mastitis research at VIDO. As well, local dairy specialists will discuss somatic cell counts in Alberta and provincial mastitis control programs.

The series will travel to: Lethbridge, Sven Erickson's, January 27; Olds, Olds College Duncan Marshall Theatre, January 28; Barrhead, Barrhead Inn, January 29; Vermilion, Provincial Building, January 30; and, Leduc, Elk's Hall, January 31. All programs begin at 9:30 a.m. with registration and coffee.

Pre-registration is required by January 17. The fee is $15 (plus GST), and it includes lunch. Registration forms and other information are available from local Alberta Agriculture district offices or regional dairy specialists.

Contact: Brian Rhiness
361-1223

Making production decisions

(Fourth in a series)

A review of economic production principles and a method to apply them to on-farm decision making is outlined in an Alberta Agriculture factsheet.

Applying nitrogen fertilizer to barley is used as an example in the factsheet to illustrate the basic economic principles involved in production decisions says Craig Edwards, a specialist with the farm business management branch in Olds.

Tables and graphs show expected barley yield in relation to nitrogen fertilizer application, dollar value related to time delays in receiving revenue, and risk and uncertainty considerations. Farmers can make good use of the article written by Leonard Bauer, a University of Alberta rural economy professor, says Edwards. "It explains a simple method to adjust expectations to different conditions of the real world using proven production principles.

"A fertilizer decision is only one of many decisions farmers have to make each year, but most decisions can be made better and easier by using a process like this," Edwards says.

Cont'd on page 4

"Making Production Decisions", Agdex 818-35 is available at Alberta Agriculture district offices or from the department's Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Farmers interested in a comprehensive farm management course that includes production planning should register as soon as possible for a Gear Up Advantage course from Alberta Agriculture. Call an Alberta Agriculture district office for more information.

The farm business management branch has developed two publications as a planning package. One is called "Gauge: A Year End Do it Yourself Financial Package" and the other is "Farm Financial Planning Worksheets". These publications may be available at Alberta Agriculture district offices or through Edwards at the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0, or call 556-4248.

Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

Agri-News briefs

November weather cooler, drier

During November both Alberta's average monthly temperature and total precipitation were below normal says Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist. The average monthly temperature, as recorded at 31 weather stations across the province, was 1.2°C cooler than the average for the period 1951 through 1980 says Peter Dzikowski. The same weather stations averaged about 18.1 mm of precipitation, slightly below the long-term average, he notes. The Peace Country received the most precipitation in the province through November. Peace River received 36.9 mm, 84 per cent above its norm of 20 mm. High Level recorded the coldest average temperature for the month at -13.7°C. This was about two and half degrees below its usual. For more information, contact Peter Dzikowski at the conservation and development in Edmonton at 422-4385.

Bull congress returns to Camrose Jan. 24-25

An educational program, vet's corner, trade show, 4-H judging seminar, farmer's market and entertainment are all on the agenda of the sixth annual Canadian Bull Congress in Camrose January 24 and 25. Among the seminar topics are poor semen quality and environmentalists versus the beef industry. Private breeders, breed associations and agribusiness are part of the trade show space. An all breeds steak challenge will be part of the entertainment. All the activities will be at the Camrose Exhibition Centre on Highway 13 just east of the city. For more information, contact William Campbell, the program director, at 672-3640 in Camrose.

National produce group to meet in Ottawa Jan. 24-27

Fresh perspectives in the global marketplace is the theme of the 67th annual convention of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association next month in Ottawa. Among the agenda topics January 24 through 27 are marketing produce in the global marketplace, legal aspects in the world market, food service needs, carving a niche in the global marketplace, and Canada, politics and the global village. The annual supermarket tour will visit some of the national capital region's top supermarkets. A four-day post-convention seminar on produce telemarketing training is also available. For more information, contact the Canadian Produce Marketing Association in Ottawa at (613)226-4187.

Video highlights the profitability of peas

A new Alberta Agriculture video production examines how peas can be good for both a producer's land and bank account. Two keys to this prosperity are proper management and marketing. The 24-minute presentation includes segments with a pea grower, a Grain Commission officer and some dramatic sequences. Well-known agricultural writer and broadcaster Noel McNaughton wrote "Peas for Profit". This new production is available for loan from Alberta Agriculture district offices, as well as from the central Film Library in Edmonton. For loan information, write 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Phone: (403) 427-2121

AGRI-NEWS

Alberta AGRICULTURE

December 30, 1991

Industry's future at top of policy agenda says minister

Solving the fundamental problems in agriculture took on greater urgency in 1991 says Alberta's agriculture minister in a year-end interview.

"Remedying the causes of low farm income preoccupied farmers and farm leaders this year," says Ernie Isley. "Governments attempted to address short term needs through safety net and other assistance programs, but confronting basic issues has moved to the forefront."

"While poor weather was an issue in northeastern Alberta, the real causes of low farm income are less obvious and certainly more difficult to resolve," says Isley. "Over-supply, trade wars, high costs and inflexible domestic infrastructure that limit our ability to respond to market demand all contribute to the farm income situation."

Isley notes the Alberta government response to farmers' short term needs was a $115 million package that included enhanced government contributions to the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) and an extension of the Alberta Crow Benefit Offset Program through to March 31, 1993.

"But, while we recognize the need to provide short term assistance, and also to provide long term income insurance type programs such as the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) and NISA, we also recognize that no one, least of all farmers, wants to rely on government assistance for their income," Isley says.

"Ad hoc programs are costly, difficult to administer and often fail to satisfy the real needs of farmers. It comes as no surprise that a recent Prairie-wide survey of farmers confirmed that farmers themselves think subsidies benefit no one.

"This must lead us to take another look at some basic elements of our nation's farm policy. Safety net programs will reduce our reliance on ad hoc programs, but other issues such as interprovincial trade barriers and grain handling and transportation still beg our attention."

Isley says he's hopeful the planned transportation consultations—scheduled to begin in January 1992—will identify clear options in reforming the Canadian grain handling and transportation system. "Production and transportation decisions need to reflect markets. This reform proposes to put decision making in the hands of farmers, where it belongs."

Independent facilitators will lead discussions on transportation reform throughout the province. Times, dates and locations will be widely advertised to allow all stakeholders the opportunity to participate in the process.

The minister says he is also hopeful a new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) agreement will be signed in the near future. Isley was in Geneva this fall as part of a trade mission that also travelled to Russia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. Isley reiterated Alberta's position that supports new rules and disciplines for export subsidies. He observes while the magnitude of reform might be less than what had been hoped for, any movement toward liberalized trade will be welcome.

Cont'd on page 2

This Week

Industry's future at the top of policy agenda says minister	1
Safety net programs will improve says associate minister	2
Grazing livestock, wildlife have similar effect on water quality	2
Manual, outlook guides to effective marketing	3
Using fertilizer economics in decision making	3
Briefs	4

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Cathy Wolters

"Reform is essential if GATT is to remain a respected institution. It will also end the senseless subsidy war which is on the verge of bankrupting many treasuries," he adds.

Aggressively marketing Alberta products both at home and abroad is another key element in the industry's strategy for future success says Isley. Although the United States and Japan will continue to be Alberta's primary export markets, Isley's trade mission reinforced Alberta's interests in Russia and Ukraine. "Alberta entrepreneurs have already established a foothold in Eastern Europe. That part of the world is undergoing a tremendous social, political and economic change. The emerging states are eager to adopt democratic and capitalist principles, which will provide many opportunities for Alberta products and services in the future."

Contact: Brad Klak
427-2137

Safety net programs will improve says associate minister

Reflecting on the first year of national safety net initiatives was uppermost on the mind of Alberta's associate agriculture minister as she looked back on 1991.

In a year-end interview, Shirley McClellan says the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) and the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) will both have long term benefits for the agricultural industry.

"A lot of people—from the safety net task force that recommended these policies to farmers across the country—have faith in the goal of safety nets," she says. "Overall, I think we can be pleased with what we've seen in this first year of operation, and know we'll continue to gain knowledge and expertise. The national GRIP committee continues to work to broaden and improve the revenue insurance program and NISA."

McClellan notes over $150 million in GRIP interim payments were mailed to Alberta grain and oilseed producers during the fall. A second interim payment will be issued in the spring, and a final payment will follow at the end of the 1991-92 crop year. "As I said when these first cheques started to go out, we will continue to explore ways to improve this program so it's responsive to the needs of Alberta farmers," says the associate minister.

She also acknowledges the role frontline Alberta Agriculture staff played in distributing information about both programs. "Many of our district offices were overwhelmed with questions about GRIP. Most recently this fall, district and regional staff have been instrumental in NISA information meetings across the province. Their work has been exceptional, as has that of the entire Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation with administrating revenue protection added to its workload."

McClellan acknowledges the tough year grain and oilseed producers have had with low prices in the face of a continued European-U.S. trade war. "I'm hopeful there will be a GATT agreement and that the trade war will ease. But, I also emphasize that we shouldn't expect that to solve all our problems. I think all Alberta farmers—myself included—must continue to diversify and strengthen our management and marketing skills."

Next year will bring a new federal/provincial soil conservation agreement. McClellan says the previous agreements, the Canada/Alberta Agreement on Soil, Water and Cropping Research Technology Transfer (CARTT) and the Canada/Alberta Soil Conservation Initiative (CASCI), have been fruitful in both heightened awareness of "our precious soil resource" and increased conservation practices.

"As the stakeholders consult on a new agreement, I believe we will be working from a solid foundation and building on the successes of the first two programs. I look forward to the final agreement, and even further in the future—beyond advancement of conservation planning and practices in our province—to a healthy and progressive agricultural industry," she says.

McClellan adds she continues to be pleased with the role the Alberta Agriculture Research Institute has played in co-ordination and support of agricultural research. "Our agricultural industry has perpetually been on the forefront in the application of new technologies. With good research, we will continue to lead the world with new and improved agricultural products and technologies."

Contact: Maureen Osadchuk
422-9156

Grazing livestock, wildlife have similar effect on water quality

American research has a happy message for livestock producers concerned about the effect their livestock may have on adjacent water quality says an Alberta Agriculture animal management specialist.

"The gist of the research is that unconfined livestock, on a range or pasture, can be seen as environmentally neutral," says Ross Gould, section head of animal management in the beef cattle and sheep branch.

Gould's observation is based on research information compiled by John Sweeten at Texas A&M University. Sweeten reports when it comes to water pollutants in neighboring streams, it's often not possible to detect a difference between pasture and rangelands containing cattle and similar land with a wildlife population. From this he suggests that, when properly managed, unconfined livestock production is an environmentally sound water quality management practice.

Other American researchers found watersheds containing grazing cattle sometimes show concentrations of bacterial indicator organisms in adjacent streams. These reported effects are detectable for only a few miles downstream. As

Cont'd on page 3

well, the effects of cattle on the watershed are indistinguishable from the effects of wildlife.

Sweeten also examined the amount of annual nutrient runoff, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, comparing precipitation, cropland, grazing and urban land drainage. "It's interesting to note," says Gould, "that the annual runoff contained less nitrogen per acre from grazed land than the nitrogen contained in the rain which fell on the land".

In a number of studies the nitrogen content in runoff water from grazed land ranged from 0.5 to 8.7 pounds per acre. This compares with 5.0 to 8.9 pounds of nitrogen per acre contained in rainfall which fell on the pastures, and 6.3 to 8.0 pounds of nitrogen per acre in runoff from urban land. Similarly, runoff from grazed land contained from 0.4 to 4.1 pounds of phosphorus per acre. In comparison, urban land drainage contained 1.0 to 5.0 pounds of phosphorus per acre.

"Sweeten and other researchers have shown that much of the nutrient and bacterial load in stream water is carried there by eroded soil," notes Gould. "This emphasizes the need for careful range management to prevent overgrazing and as a result, an increase in soil erosion."

Contact: Ross Gould
427-5083

Manual, outlook guides to effective marketing

Keeping up with the latest in market know-how, as well as the rise and fall of commodity markets, can be puzzling at the best of times.

To help producers make sense of those puzzle pieces, Alberta Agriculture offers market information on a wide range of agricultural products. In particular, the "Marketing Manual" is a single source of marketing that explains the how-tos of marketing, and the "Monthly Commentary and Outlook" gives price forecasts and marketing strategies.

The "Marketing Manual" was introduced last year says Marilyn Johnson, extension economist with the department's market analysis branch. The manual has extensive information on marketing principles; grain, livestock and special commodity marketing; a 250 term glossary; and, many appendices providing current information on everything from freight rates to wool buyers.

"The manual is set up to be a practical and convenient resource to farmers, especially since marketing products is more than just selling your product. Marketing means knowing your costs of production and cash flow needs, and then evaluating all the pricing and delivery alternatives available," Johnson says

"Today's successful business person knows that marketing is part of the total farming operation," she adds.

The manual comes in a three ring binder divided into sections according to the commodity group. Each section has individual modules on specific topics. For example, the grain marketing section has 15 different modules covering producer cars, the Winnipeg canola cash call market, a decision tree for grain marketing and a variety of other pricing and delivery alternatives.

"The modules are written and revised throughout the year," notes Johnson, "and an expert committee reviews each module before it is released."

The "Marketing Manual" is relatively inexpensive. It costs $35 plus GST. Once purchased, the owner's name and address are recorded so free updates and additions can be mailed out.

For producers looking to keep up with specific markets more closely, a subscription to the "Monthly Commentary and Outlook" may be an answer she says. For $30 (plus GST) annually, subscribers receive a monthly look at cattle, hog, lamb, grain, oilseed and special commodity markets.

"Each month analysts look at key activities in these markets. Price forecasts for up to six months and suggested market strategies to capitalize on the market situation are part of the outlook," says Johnson.

Anyone interested in either of these services should contact Johnson at Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch in Edmonton at 427-5387. Brochures with order forms for the manual and the monthly commentary are also available at Alberta Agriculture district offices.

The market analysis branch also provides weekly market information. It can be heard on Alberta Agriculture's "Call of the Land" radio show every Friday. As well, a weekly market report is available on the provincial Agri-Net telephone information system, the department's COMPUFARM electronic bulletin board and GRASSROOTS.

Contact: Marilyn Johnson
427-5387

Using fertilizer economics in decision making

(Fifth in a series)

Farmers planning to fertilize in the 1992 crop year can improve their decision making skills by studying an Alberta Agriculture factsheet.

The factsheet, "Fertilizer Economics" (Agdex 822-11), is available from Alberta Agriculture district offices or from the Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

"The publication uses a common sense approach to help interested producers decide how much nitrogen fertilizer to apply," says Craig Edwards of the farm business management branch in Olds.

In the factsheet, marginal analysis and equal marginal return analysis are demonstrated with a common sense method based on comparing added returns with the added costs of

Cont'd on page 4

each application. The comparison enables producers to assess potential gains relative to potential losses and helps them select a rate of application associated with their ability to take risks and their attitude about taking chances on the outcome.

"Producers can use the procedure described in the article to improve the probability of increasing their production profits. Understanding the concepts will assist them in developing production plans that make economic sense," he says.

Farmers interested in a comprehensive farm management course should register for Alberta Agriculture's Gear Up Advantage as soon as possible. Call any Alberta Agriculture district office for information.

The farm business management branch has developed two publications as a planning package. One is "Gauge: A Year End 'Do It Yourself' Financial Package" and the other is "Farm Financial Planning Worksheets" (FFPW). These publications may be available at Alberta Agriculture district offices. You can also request the publications by writing Edwards at the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0, or calling 556-4248.

Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

Agri-News briefs

Alberta seed growers meet Jan. 28-30

The Alberta branch of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association will hold its 63rd annual meeting January 28 through 30 at the Edmonton Hilton. Besides the business meeting, the agenda includes a panel on new directions for the seed industry, revisions to the Seed Act and a report on new varieties. Registration is $75 (includes GST). For more information, contact Bill Witbeck in Lacombe at 782-4641.

Video puts spotlight on diversification

Diversifying a farm operation is a shelter from the storm of selling into a single market. When depressed markets and low prices hit a commodity, the diversified producer is protected from serious trouble. Alberta farm broadcaster Noel McNaughton chronicles three successfully diversified operations in a new Alberta Agriculture video. McNaughton says much of the emphasis in the video production is on the steps producers should take as they consider diversifying. In "Farm Diversification" (VT 180-1) McNaughton visits: an east central Alberta couple who built a greenhouse and grow long stemmed roses; agroforestry in Saskatchewan with trees grown for shelterbelts and farm woodlot management; and, a Bow Island entrepreneur who has carved a niche market in sunflowers and birdseed. The video is now available for loan from all Alberta Agriculture district offices. As well, it's available for loan by writing the Alberta Agriculture Film Library, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Canadian grain/oilseed exports on faster pace than last year

Exports of Canadian grains and oilseeds are progressing at a faster pace than last year says an Alberta Agriculture statistician. A November agreement to ship four million tonnes of wheat and barley to the Soviet Union over the following three months could be "the preamble to a record crop export season" says Michael Adam. Canada's crop exports in 1990-91 approached record levels he adds. Total shipments of major grains and oilseeds increased almost 17 per cent from previous levels to 28.8 million tonnes. This is the third highest export quantity on record behind 1986-87 and 1987-88 when sales topped 30 million tonnes. The marked improved came almost exclusively from increased Canadian Wheat Board sales to the Soviet Union. Wheat shipments there more than doubled to 7.2 million tonnes from 3.5 million in the previous year. Other substantial shipments included: 1.9 million tonnes of canola seed to Japan; significant wheat shipments to China, Iran and Japan; barley exports to Saudi Arabia and Japan; and wheat exports to the U.S. and EC. Total revenue from crop exports were lower, by almost $84 million, than the previous year despite the 4.1 million tonne increase in sales. "On average, the export price of the seven principal crops was 22 per cent below the 1989-90 price, at $162 per tonne compared to $208 per tonne," Adam says. In particular, the average wheat price was greatly reduced at $158 per tonne, down $51 per tonne. For more information, contact Adam in Edmonton at 427-4011.

Western grocery distributors meet Jan. 31 in Calgary

Producers, processors, food brokers, manufacturer representatives, wholesaler, retailers and government officials can attend the one day western regional conference of the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD) January 31 in Calgary. Among the topics on the agenda are a consumer's view of the food industry, status quo—the silent killer, dealing with damage, space management and the economic future of Western Canada. For more information, contact Bryan Walton, western regional director, in Edmonton at 435-8823.

Public input sought for Alberta's economic strategy

As part of the Alberta government's "Toward 2000 Together" program a number of public forums will take place in Alberta communities. "Toward 2000 Together" is the title of a discussion paper released by the provincial government on economic options and choices. Forums will allow individuals, chambers of commerce, local governments, business groups and other stakeholders to present briefs, submission, ideas and questions. Members of the provincial cabinet's economic planning committee and local MLAs will chair the forums. The next forum will be in Lethbridge January 17 followed by Medicine Hat on January 31, Red Deer on February 14, Calgary on February 28, Grande Prairie on March 13 and Edmonton on March 27. Citizens can also contribute by filling out a questionnaire. Information packages with the questionnaire are available by calling 1-800-661-PLAN. For more information about the "Toward 2000 Together" program, contact Alberta Economic Development and Trade in Edmonton at 427-0670.